



育成計画

魔法少女

illustration マルイノ

遠藤浅蜷

Endou Asari

episodes Φ
エピソード・ファイ

Wandering Project

Mahou Shoujo Ikusei Keikaku

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by Endou Asari

[Novel Updates](#)

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Illustrations







「これ、落としましたよ」

「あら、ありがとう」

我らのリアルは
充実しているか？

髑髏マークが頭の上に
浮かんでいたのは
前の席に座っている中学生くらいの男の子だった。

ハンカチを拾ってくれた少年だ。

The Goggles and the Turtle

**This story is set immediately after Magical Girl
Raising Project: Limited**

A Magical Girl's body is robust, while a Mage's physical strength and healing power is the same as a human's. However, Mages can cast magic to heal and cure their injuries. So, normally, Mages don't need to go to a hospital.

Does that mean Mages don't need hospitals at all?

Well, no. There are times when a Mage would prefer to use a hospital instead of using magic spells. If a Mage actually wanted to cure the common cold with a magic spell, they'd need to buy a chicken, cut off its head, and cast a spell using it.

Much easier to go to a hospital.

Also, there are other reasons to go to a hospital. Poisons and Magical effects need to be cured via a specialized hospital. You can never be too careful with magic. Thus, a hospital is still needed for Mages.

After the B-City incident, Mana was taken to the hospital immediately. The recoil of overdosing with Healing Medicine had a huge effect on her body.

Humans were never meant to have a Magical Girl's capabilities, and after sustaining her body, it popped like a bubble, unable to take the enormous energy it's exertion.

7753 hugged Mana as soon as she woke up from her huge battle. She was mentally and physically exhausted, unable to think of anything else but Mana.

Her goggles had a message appearing on them,

Get Mana to a hospital, fast! She's dying.

But 7753 couldn't move her body. She was too busy crying at the thought of not being able to see Mana again.

Even when the ambulances finally arrived, 7753 couldn't move. They took Mana to the hospital, and helped 7753 and Tepsekemei get resettled away.

In contrast, her (new) roommate, Tepsekemei, didn't cry. Although she couldn't express any emotions, she was still extremely sad. 7753 knew this through the use of her goggles, which she can use to tell Mei's current mood and feelings.

After the incident, Tepsekemei began trying to learn as much as she could. She read picture books and children's literature, learning the alphabet and understanding how languages worked. Eventually, she began to understand words and sentences and how to properly form them, and can read basic sentences, as well.

The town was in ruins. There were so many civilian deaths, so many lives ruined. It's hard to believe that this was actually the *best* outcome. If they hadn't stopped Pukin and Rain Pou, even more would've been destroyed.

7753 had a conversation with her mentor.

"What did they do about the killswitch plan?"

They denied it as a rumor

"What? Just a rumor? But they were going to use it."

I know. But with the way things went, if they had confirmed those rumors, it would've made the Foreign Affairs Division look horrible.

"That makes sense..."

7753. I know you decided to stay when I asked you to save yourself .

"...I"

Relax. I'm not blaming you. You're not going to be punished. You did what you had to do, and the city was saved as a result. You've done all you can. Go get some rest. You deserve it.

7753 thought back on those words. ' *you've done all you can .* '

It wasn't enough.

Wedin is dead.

Kuru-Kuru Hime is dead.

Funny Trick is dead.

Countless of the students had died, countless more innocents had died. Her best wasn't enough. She couldn't save everyone.

The unsung heroes, the Namiyama Magical Girls. Brought into this situation with no clue of the Land of Magic, no clue of the inner politics, no notion of anything beyond the barrier.

Yet they did better than anyone could've asked for.

When 7753 scanned their powers with her goggles, she didn't just scan their full potential as Magical Girls.

She saw through everything they knew.

She saw all their experiences, all that mattered to them. Their hopes, their joys, their fears. Their reasons for fighting, their willingness.

Her goggles gave her factual information, and as a result, she could see everything they thought about as they decided to help in the final battle.

But what hurt her the most, was when she saw the level of trust that they placed on 7753. They trusted her completely, even though 7753 had been keeping secrets and lying to a lot of people throughout the incident.

They were true Magical Girls.

Yet, they were the ones who died, and someone like 7753 was the one who survived, instead.

After recovering from the incident, 7753 found Tepsekemei's lamp that she left in the battlefield somewhere in town.

She received a message from her mentor as well,

7753. If you could, please take care of Tepsekemei.

She shouldn't be a bother if you have her lamp. She'll probably need food, some books, and a place to stay.

Animal Magical Girls are a rare breed. 7753 had scouted over 500 Magical Girls, and out of them, there were only 3 animals.

In most cases, they were quite blunt. They tend to act on instinct, and they express their emotions extremely and straightforwardly. Their allegiances are always clear as well, rarely backstabbing those who they are loyal to.

Tepsekemei though, is unique even among Animal Magical Girls. She rarely shows emotions, is even calmer than most human Magical Girls, and perhaps quiet too. It's natural of course, as she's a turtle.

After moving in with 7753, Tepsekemei often got out to the gardens, dug holes, and stared at the sky while flying.

She had no care in the world, and that worried 7753.

"Uh, Mei... Could you please try and be careful when you go out?"

"What do you mean?"

"Can you try not to make yourself visible?"

"But Mei likes being visible."

"I know... but... the neighbors, they're not Magical Girls, and seeing a flying genie probably isn't a good idea."

And so Tepsekemei always assimilated herself with the wind, and went out invisible whenever she got out of the house.

This isn't the only time Tepsekemei does this, as she took the meaning of '*What's mine is your*' a bit... too literally.

"This is Mei's house, so Mei can do what Mei wants."

"No, Mei. This is *my* house. You're my roommate."

"We are sleeping together, so this is Mei's house."

"Sle-wait, how'd you even know that word?"

"Mei learned it on TV."

Why did she have to use *sleeping together* ...

Maybe she was a male turtle before transformation. The thought scared her. 7753 decided that *ignorance is bliss* and didn't bother checking with her goggles.

Day in and day out, 7753 always had to care for Tepsekemei. Her antics often made her day busy, and actually... that's pretty good for her, too.

Whenever things are quiet, 7753 would feel very depressed, still thinking about the event from before.

They had to work together with Pythie, who was the worst of the worst. It was required because they needed to defeat an even stronger enemy. Pukin.

Hana, who fought Pukin even until she died.

Mao Pam, who rescued Hana and risked her life.

Ripple, who went to help Mao Pam and never returned.

Wedin...

...Wedin, the girl who just wanted to be a Magical Girl.

Funny Trick, who crawled while she was dying, and still attacked Pukin, even as her injuries pained her.

Kuru-Kuru Hime, who willingly became a decoy so that Pukin would be defeated.

Magical Girls have stronger mental strength than their human forms. This is true for their hearts, or any other part of their body. 7753 remained as a Magical Girl inside her house.

This is because if she transformed into a human, she'd be mentally exhausted, unable to sleep from being one of the few survivors of the massacre.

If she became human again, she would shrink back into alcoholism to relieve the pain, and then her body would be destroyed. At times, she

thought about it, but then she saw Tepsekemei, and she decided to keep going, despite how painful it can be.

Three weeks had passed since the B-City incident, and her mentor had contacted her again.

Good news. Mana's recovering well.

If you'd like, you could go visit her. I've got the hospital address sent to your goggles. I asked Mana's father, and he said it'd be fine for someone to go visit her.

She won't say it, but she longs for visitors. I'm still trying to deal with the chaos in the Land of Magic, but you should go see her.

A visit would be nice. 7753 wanted to see Mana again, but she also felt guilty for getting Mana into this situation, for lying to her.

"7753 is visiting Mana? Mei wants to visit too."

Mei's eagerness convinced 7753 to give Mana a visit.

7753 made Tepsekemei promise to stay in her lamp at all times. To keep her head still, and not attract attention.

Tepsekemei nodded, and after finding a way to hide her hair, 7753, still in Magical Girl form, went to the hospital. She placed the lamp inside her bag, and Tepsekemei went inside of it.

Occasionally, Tepsekemei's head began to seep through the lamp and out of her bag.

"I told you to keep your head down, Mei!"

"But Mei wants to see outside."

"People are going to be freaked out. Just hang in there, okay?"

Tepsekemei nodded and went back inside.

The air was cold. It's about to be winter, and the trees are already starting to dry up. Yet, everyone is having fun and walking around.

7753 found a nice flower shop. She brought a bouquet of pink cymbidium flowers, decorated with some ribbons. She also brought chocolate mousses, the most expensive ones too. Only the best for Mana.

“Mei smells something delicious.”

“I told you not to pop your head out!”

“Sorry...”

7753 bought a cheesecake, and stuffed it into her bag. Tepsekemei eagerly chewed on that cheesecake and didn't make another sound again.

Magical Girls don't need to eat, but Tepsekemei was munching all of this food. Maybe it was her animal instincts kicking in.

Finally, they arrived at the hospital. It was pure white, and clean, with no stains at all on the...

...Nevermind, if you looked closely, you'd see bird poop everywhere.

Nevertheless, this hospital was one of the Land of Magic sanctioned hospitals. They have all the necessary equipment for removing magical poisoning from a Mage. Of course, the hospital accepts normal patients too. In fact, most of the patients here are human.

“Mei doesn't like this smell.”

“Nobody likes hospital smell, Mei. Patience okay?”

7753 entered the lounge. It was a big room with only a few people there. A large mirror was on the wall. 7753 stopped in front of the mirror.

Tepsekemei popped out,

“Pee?”

“Wha-no! Why would I pee in the lounge?”

Tepsekemei shrugged and went back in the bag.

7753 looked at herself in the mirror. It reflected her completely. Her heart felt sad, but she can't make that feeling go away.

She put on her goggles, and set it to detect the level of *sadness* , then *pain* , then *loneliness* . However, no data came out.

That's because she's only looking at a mirror. It only reflected an image of 7753, not 7753 herself. So, scanning herself was near-impossible.

That's what's bothering her. She knew everything about everyone else, but she's so confused about what she's feeling now.

7753 had waited for quite some time. Finally, visiting hours were available. She went straight towards Mana's room.

At first, she was walking fine, but then her palms began to sweat. She became nervous.

What did Mana think of all this? What did Mana think of the incident? Was she going to get scolded by Mana? She was prepared to accept the worst.

7753 took off her goggles, placing them in her bag. She didn't want to wear goggles when she was in Mana's room. It's probably rude.

She knocked on the door.

"Come in," said a voice from inside.

The room was filled with colorful magical squares on the ceilings, walls, and floor. There was also an LCD TV, a fridge, a sofa, and a bed.

On the bed was a sickly-looking girl. Mana. 7753 could barely recognize her, since she was so out of shape.

"Oh, it's you," said Mana. Her voice was cracked, and she was sniffing. Her face and eyes were red.

"You okay?" asked 7753.

"I mean... I'm in a hospital, so who knows?" said Mana.

7753 stood beside the window. She was glad that she wasn't being scolded by Mana, but at the same time she felt sorry for her.

"Find a seat if you want. Make yourself at home," said Mana.

“Can Mei go out?” asked Mei from inside 7753’s bag.

“Huh? Oh, yeah, sure.”

Tepsekemei got out, 7753’s goggles on her head.

Mana’s face freaked out. “What’s she doing? Hey, put those goggles away!”

7753 panicked and quickly removed the goggles from Tepsekemei’s head.

“Are you going to beat up Mana?” asked Tepsekemei.

“What? No! Why?” asked 7753.

“You said we’re visiting to ‘take care’ of her.”

“We *are* visiting to take care of her!”

Tepsekemei tilted her head in confusion.

“Doesn’t take care mean beating up?”

“No! It means to care for a person, where’d you even get *that* from?”

“Television.”

“Mei... I think you’re watching the wrong kinds of dramas. Oh, I almost forgot. I’ve got presents, Mana!”

7753 took out the bouquet and food that she brought earlier.

“Mind if I put it in here?” asked 7753, as she placed the flowers in a vase near Mana.

Mana simply nodded.

She hadn’t noticed it before, but it seemed like the way this room was decorated, that this was a VIP room of some sort. Makes sense. Mana was pretty high up in the Examination Division.

7753 looked out the window.

“It’s almost Christmas soon. Can’t believe it’s been a month.”

Mana glanced from her bed. Her hair was in shambles. Gone are her trademark curly swirls on the side. She looked like she hadn't seen sunlight in a long time.

"How are you, lately?" asked Mana weakly.

"I'm okay. I should be asking you that question though."

"Well... Like I said. I'm in a hospital. Hey, by the way. When all this is over, mind if I talk to your boss?"

"Yeah. She says she's busy cleaning up some stuff."

"Alright. I'm going to try and piece together what I can, once I recover."

Mana ate some of the mousse. With every bite, it seems like her face began to become redder and redder.

"Hey, 7753."

"Yeah?"

"Remember when I said I wanted to talk to your boss?"

"You mean just a few seconds ago?"

"Yes. Can I talk to her directly?"

"Sure."

"Like, in person."

"Okay? I can help you with that."

"Here, perhaps. While I'm still recovering, maybe. As soon as you can."

"Um... well, she's a bit busy, but... I guess if you wanted to talk to her, and it's urgent."

"Yes... Very urgent. I need to investigate from all points of views."

"That's true."

"Hana always told me to give everyone the benefit of the doubt. She said... That people do things for a reason, and to them, their reason may be just. So... I just wanna know..."

“That’s fair.”

“Also... Um... I don’t know how to say this...”

“We won’t judge, Mana.”

“Okay...”

Mana took a deep breath. Her face red with embarrassment.

“...Nobody visits me.”

7753 looked slightly startled by that statement.

“What are you talking about? We’ll always visit you, Mana,” said 7753. Tepsekemei nodded as well.

“Yeah... you two... and my Father. But that man always brings research and whatnot and doesn’t actually bring me anything else. I haven’t changed from these hospital robes in weeks. At least bring me fresh clothes...”

Mana’s lips began to tremble.

“Mana, hey, if you need us to-”

“And really, couldn’t he spend some time to actually talk to me, too? And where’s the rest of the Examination Division? I’m not trying to brag, but the least they could do is check up on me, y’know? Nobody’s come here in the last three weeks. The only one that’s ever visited me before when I got sick was... was...”

Her eyes started tearing up.

“Mana... you okay?” asked 7753 nervously.

Mana then began sobbing and crying.

“...I’ve got no one else anymore... Nobody really loves an asshole like me... The only one that ever visited me was Hana, and she’s gone, now... Hana’s gone... Sis...”

7753 stood up from her chair and sat next to Mana.

“Hey, it’s okay... Hey, we’re here.”

“Sis... I want my sister back... I miss my sister...”

All the emotion she kept bottled in from the incident. Three weeks of mourning and denial poured out of her eyes as she cried.

Her crying became louder, and she began bawling like a baby. She immediately hugged 7753 tightly.

“Nobody loves me anymore... You’ll come, right... I don’t wanna be alone...”

7753 nervously hugged Mana, “Yeah, it’s okay. Um... Hey, we’re always gonna be here, alright?”

Mana’s crying became louder and louder.

Then the door opened, “What’s going on, here?”



There was a bear at the door.

Wait, no, that's just a nurse that's the size of a bear.

"Do I smell alcohol?" asked the nurse.

"Huh? Alcohol? No, we didn't have alcohol in here," said 7753.

The nurse looked at the chocolate mousse, and sniffed it. She glared at 7753. "This is alcohol. There's traces of alcohol in the food. It's probably harder to smell due to the disinfectant, but this is alcohol."

"I, uh... I didn't know, hehe..." said 7753 sheepishly.

Mana looked at 7753 with anger, "You *spiked my food*!? You *assholes* ! I thought you said you loved me, Waaaah!"

"Mana, calm down, I uh... We didn't know, sorry!" said 7753 sheepishly.

The nurse shook her head, "Alcohol wouldn't affect Magical Girls, but Mana's under severe magical poisoning. Her immune system is weak, so the alcohol has a higher effect on her. Please, let us handle this."

"Sorry, Mana! Sorry!" said 7753.

"GET OUT!!! I DON'T WANNA SEE YOUR *STUPID* FACES AGAIN... except I DO!! SO DON'T... LEAVE FOREVER, JUST... NGGGH"

The nurse tightly hugged Mana, "Alright calm down, now. You two, leave."

7753 nodded and dragged Tepsekemei outside the room.

"Well... that was unexpected," said 7753. She honestly didn't know that there were alcoholic traces on the mousse.

Tepsekemei glanced at 7753.

"7753. Why did Mana have small red things."

"Huh?"

"When Mei put on goggles. She had small red things when we came in. She had lots of them before that."

“Oh. The hearts. They detect things about people.”

“Mei is worried.”

7753 took out her goggles and checked the status.

It was detecting *Loneliness* . When 7753 and Tepsekemei came in, it must’ve shrank to nothing.

That made 7753 happy.

“Hey, Mei. Let’s go back inside. Mana might kick us out again, but I think she’d appreciate us being there.”

Tepsekemei nodded and went back inside her lamp.

Her head slowly popped out as well.

“Y’know, Mana’s a lot more open when she’s drunk,” said 7753.

“Yes. She is,” replied Mei.

“Let’s try and cheer her up, okay. Losing something you love isn’t easy.”

“Mei would be sad if Mei lost her lamp.”

“That lamp?”

“Yes. Grace gave it to Mei.”

“Grace?”

“Captain Grace. She’s like Wedin. She has friends. She gave Mei the lamp. Mei misses her.”

7753 didn’t really know Captain Grace, but it must’ve been one of the Namiyama High School kids.

7753 nodded and nervously gripped the door.

Today, she’s going to be there for Mana.

7753 confidently turned the doorknob.

Fast Music

**This story takes place several months before
Magical Girl Raising Project**

A loud crash erupted throughout the room.

That was the sound of the door opening, with a slam no less. In fact, it made two noises. The first when the door was slammed, the second when it hit the wall and slammed back.

Only one girl is this brash...

“HEEEY! It’s your girlfriend, Tot Pop, WASSUP?”

Oh god...

This girl was extremely annoying, troublesome, and downright hard to deal with.

A black and white striped shirt, skull-shaped motif, punk metal style outfit, and of course a guitar.

Her face was clad in glittery make-up, one that screams ‘I’m a rockstar!’

She’s a punk rocker, and she really does fill in that *punk* role in *punk rocker*.

“I know who you are... You don’t need to *scream your name* everytime you come to me, y’know?”

“Aww, what’s the matter, Keek? Someone got up on the wrong side of the bed? C’mon, we’re practically sisters! Also fellow apprentices!”

“Sisters? Apprentices? To who? what the hell are you talking about?”

“Oh, whoopsies! Didn’t mean to spill that out, it’s *Top Secret* and stuff, heh”

Seriously, this girl is going to drive Keek insane.

Keek sat back in her chair and flipped around, trying her best to ignore Tot Pop. Unfortunately, Tot Pop wouldn’t have it.

She grabbed a chair of her own without permission and began to approach Keek anyways, sitting backwards on the chair, casually staring at Keek.

“Go away,” said Keek.

“Nah,” said Tot Pop.

“I’m busy!”

“I’m not, so I’m staying”

“Why?”

“Cuz I’m bored!”

This... fucking...

Keek attempted to straighten her glasses, but her sleeves were so long that she couldn’t actually get it outside of it.

Damn costume.

“Alright, fine... You got my attention. What do you want, Tot?” asked Keek.

“Mmmm, I dunno, I just like talking with ya!” replied Tot with a smile.

“Seriously!?”

“No, really, it’s fun! Look at you, your cheeks are getting all red, Haha!”

“Wait, what? Bullshit!”

“Yep, you caught me! I was bullshitting ya! HA!”

“You know, Tot... You’re really...”

“Really... what?”

“Just... Tell me what you’re here for?”

“Alright, alright, so... You know any higher-ups in the Management Division?” asked Tot Pop

“No.”

“You know anyone who knows any higher-ups in the Management Division?”

“Not... exactly, but...”

“BUT! There’s a BUT! Cool, introduce me!”

“Huh!?”



“C’mon, help me out! Throw a bone, Keek!”

Keek does know some people in the Divisions. Keek herself is privy to many of the Land of Magic’s Divisions and whatnot.

Unfortunately, Tot Pop isn’t the kind of person who the higher-ups would really like to meet, so it’s going to be really hard.

Still, that probably means they’ll get Tot Pop in trouble.

Heh.

“Alright, I’ll introduce you, but you *need* to follow my instructions,” said Keek.

“Aw, thanks a bunchies, Keek-Chan! Hugs and kisses, mwah mwah!”

“Shut the *hell* up, already!”

In a dark room, there was a large mandala hanging in the air.

The room itself was dark, with no lights at all. There was only a table, and on that table, were two individuals.

On one side, was an old man, grey bearded, with a cane. He was a Mage.

On the other side was a guitarist Magical Girl, that looked like a punk rocker, smiling with her guitar on the floor.

The old Mage wrinkled his eyes.

“I was told I’d be meeting with a member of the Osk Faction... Since they don’t have much Magical Girls I wasn’t expecting a Magical Girl...”

“Well, I’m the Magical Girl, name’s Tot Pop! Nice to meetcha, pops!”

“I hate Magical Girls.”

“WOW! That’s a great first impression there. Luckily, I’m a patient gal!”

“Oh no, it’s not just you. Magical Girls have made Mages seem like nothing in comparison. Nobody appreciates true magic anymore. They only prefer the ‘luxurious easy life’ of being chosen as a Magical Girl. Oh yes, strength, speed, power, sure, but a Mage can offer so much more, yet nobody ever considers them the time of day, do they? You Magical Girls are in charge of almost everything!”

“Y’know, I have no idea what you just said, but I feel like you don’t really like me that much.”

“Get out!” said the Mage.

He pointed his cane at the exit door, shaking in anger at the presence of Tot Pop.

“Whaat, we’ve only just met!”

“I will *not* be talking to a Magical Girl! Out!”

“Hear me out a bit, gramps! Gimme five minutes, tops!” Said Tot Pop grinning, offering her hand to the Mage.

30 minutes later

“...And so, they denied me my privilege to join the upper ranks of the Land of Magic because a Magical Girl was *so much better* at doing it rather than me! Can you believe it!” said the Mage.

“That’s rough. I mean, I know Mages have it rough, but that’s *super* rough,” said Tot Pop nodding.

“And then I tried applying for other jobs, and then where do they put me?”

“Lemme guess, this shithole?” asked Tot Pop.

“EXACTLY! No offense, but I really dislike Magical Girls, and they put me as the Head of the Magical Girl Management Division! A Division that sorts out the other Divisions and whose job is to talk... with MAGICAL GIRLS! The nerve!”

“Yeesh, that’s a bitch to deal with. Sorry, man. But hey, it’s not all bad!”

“Really? Why’s that?”

“You got to meet little ol’ Tot Pop!”

“Now you’re just rubbing salt in the wound. Why are you here anyway?”

“I need Magical Daisy’s address.”

“Fine. Here, take it,” said the Mage, scribbling down an address and giving it straight to Tot Pop.

“Wow, just like that? Don’t you have to contact HR or something? Or PR?”

“Why bother? I’ve done this for a lot of Magical Girls, I don’t want to deal with that crap, I remember a lot of famous Magical Girls’ addresses, so there, just take it and go already.”

“Whoo! Thanks, pops! Best of luck to ya!”

Tot Pop took the paper and left, slamming the door as she left the room. The old Mage sat down.

He had no idea why, but he spent over 30 minutes sharing his life story with that Magical Girl.

Sigh ...

When Kiku Yakumo returned to her apartment, it had been a long day.

She had just finished her college studies, taken a part-time job, changed into a Magical Girl to help the neighborhood, mostly by taking out the trash, and afterwards, she washed away all her sweat and grunge in the public baths.

She was hoping to just go home and rest in the futon, but when she opened the door to her apartment, what she saw was a guitar on the side of her door, and on her couch, sitting and waiting, was a strange rockstar Magical Girl.

“Oh, HEY! WELCOME HOME! Name’s Tot Pop, nice to meetcha!”

“Eh? Wha... Huh?” said Kiku.

“Aw don’t be shy, I’m a Magical Girl!”

“Magical Girl? Here? How?”

“Asked the Management Division, told me your address, pretty easy actually!”

“B-But I locked my doors, how’d you-”

“Get in? Aw, I just asked the landlord. She was a nice lady, she let me in just fine!”

“Um... I don’t know what to... Uh...”

“You’re Magical Daisy, right?” asked Tot Pop.

“Y-Yes?”

“Do me a favor and transform for me?”

Kiku took out her Magical Phone and transformed. Her green hair, dress, cane, and everything related to Daisy was now in full view.

Tot Pop laid down in the Tatami mat, clapping her hands.

“WOW! You really *are* Magical Daisy! Awesome!”

“Ehehe... Thanks,” said Daisy.

Tot Pop stood up and shook Daisy’s hand, “It’s honestly *such* an honor meeting a legend like you!”

“W-Well, I wouldn’t call myself a legend,” said Daisy.

“Y’know the other day I was watching the Magical Daisy Anime,” said Tot Pop.

“Oh? Thank you!”

“Shame it got cancelled, but I bought the Blu-Rays, had all the extra little scenes in it! You have ‘em right?”

“Ehehe... Y-Yes, I uh... I actually... collectthemandstuff...”

“Hey, that’s totally fine! By the way, I had a question, if you don’t mind. I *love* your opening theme!”

“Ah... Ehehe, really?” asked Daisy while blushing.

“YEAH! Y’know... *Logical, Cynical, Miracle! Magicaaaaal Daisy!* really gets on your brain y’know? Did you write that yourself?”

“I uh... I didn’t actually.”

“WHAT? Seriously? Who wrote it? I need to know, I gotta get that OP sung to me live!”

“Well, it was someone from Human Resources, if I recall correctly. You could go back to Management and find out,” said Daisy.

“I would if I could, but the old man there hates me, so... Pretty please?”

“I don’t know if I should...”

30 minutes later

“...And then I pose and do a DAIISYYYYY BEAAAM!”

“And then WHOOSH! Bad guys destroyed! AWESOME!” shouted Tot Pop.

“I wish it were that easy in real life though, I don’t use it against people, since it kills them. Also, you might wanna quiet down, or the neighbors will here,” said Daisy.

“Aw, neighbours, schneighbours, you’re *Magical Daisy* ! Once in a lifetime opportunity, if I do say so myself!”

“Y’know, you’re not so bad, Tot Pop... Hmm... I don’t know if I should do this, but here’s the contact address for the staff involved with my Anime. The Composer and songwriter should be there,” said Daisy.

“Oh, thanks a bunch Daisy! Y’know they say superstars tend to be really self-centered, but you’re a nice gal, y’know?” Said Tot Pop winking.

“Ehehe... I’m just trying to help out,” said Daisy, scratching her head.

She was actually sweating out of nervousness. Showing off to someone about *Magical Daisy* was a dream come true. Though, the room was a bit tight.

“Welp, time to hit the road, see ya ‘round, Daisy!” said Tot Pop.

On a forested area covered in snow and mountains, lies a hut where only a lone Magical Girl lived.

This Magical Girl was known as The Forest Musician, Clamberry.

Sitting at the base of the hut, was Clamberry and Tot Pop, side by side.

“So yeah, I heard you wrote the *Magical Daisy* Opening, is that true?” asked Tot Pop with curiosity.

“I did, I remember doing that a couple years back,” said Clamberry.

She smiled a bit, closing her eyes, reminiscing about the old times in her job, before she was involved in all of this.

“So it *is* true! Hey, y’know, Forest Musician, *I’m* a musician too!”

Clamerry didn't like guests. She'd usually go away if there's guests, but Tot Pop had stated that she's from the Management Division, checking in on Clamerry.

Apparently that's how she found out Clamerry's current address for her latest test.

Fav told her that if a Land of Magic employee comes, just play it safe and do her best to appeal to them.

The sooner they get what they want, the sooner they'll leave.

30 Minutes later

"A Magical Girl family? Seriously? That's rare! I mean... *Super* rare!" said Tot Pop.

"Indeed, it was a family of four or five. I remember approaching them. They had no idea the others were Magical Girls until they all met."

"You remember all of 'em?" asked Tot Pop.

"Every single one," said Clamerry.

An hour later

"Social games *are* quite popular. Y'know sometimes I still play on my cellphone as a human too," said Tot Pop.

"I've never had the pleasure myself, but I understand its popularity. Actually, it was Fav's idea in the first place," said Clamerry.

"Your Cyber Fairy's pretty neat, coming up with ideas like that," said Tot Pop.

"He's the one mostly in charge, though we pull our weight together," said Clamerry.

Two hours later

"...Thus, I seek the strongest."

"How strong are we talkin' bout here?"

"One that can surpass God himself," said Clamerry.

“Oooh, spooky! Doesn’t it get boring though?”

“Beg your pardon?”

“I mean fighting all the time can get pretty boring. You have any hobbies... Anything like that?” asked Tot Pop.

“Miss Tot Pop, I think you misunderstand me. Fighting *is* my hobby. I won’t get bored because that’s my desire,” said Clamerry with a grin.

Suddenly, Clamerry’s Magical Phone began activating. Fav, her Cyber Fairy, showed up.

“How long have you two been talking, Pon?” asked Fav.

“You know us... We’re ladies, we nag and talk all day!” said Tot Pop.

“...And how long will it be for, Pon?”

“Really, it’s Clamerry here telling the stories! I’m just listening, cause all of it seems to be really interesting!” said Tot Pop.

“What exactly do you want, Pon?” asked Fav.

“Oh, not much, I just need some info on some Magical Girls that passed your selection tests!”

“Well, we have some info, Pon. Just download the whole list, Pon!”

Fav’s eyes blinked a bit, and the info was downloaded to Tot Pop’s Magical Phone.

“Wow, Clamerry was right, you *are* pretty chill, Fav! I like mascots like you. Fast, reliable, and you get the kids’ generation, with that smartphone game idea of yours, you clever little devil you!”

“Well, hopefully that satisfies you and whatever the Management Division wants, Pon!”

“Of course it does! Oh, Clamerry”

“Hm?” asked Clamerry.

“We should get together and form a band. I play the guitar, you play the violin, hell, you could even sing! It’ll be fun!” said Tot Pop.

“...I’ll consider it,” said Clamberry.

Tot Pop left the area.

Now alone, Clamberry was back to waiting as Fav prepared his plans for the smartphone game.

Clamberry imagined herself on stage, singing and dancing with Tot Pop playing guitar in the background.

Hm...

Perhaps that could be fun, actually...

Maybe sometime in the future, once my goals have been met .

Clamberry smiled, and closed her eyes.

Four Magical Girls were sitting around a table in S-City.

On the table was a map of the city, with a variety of dotted plans and areas. On the bulletin board was a map of the city too, but this time there’s some other information too.

These Magical Girls were preparing a heist.

They had a variety of tools for the job, though each of their costumes are quite different, so they weren’t unified.

Not to mention they’re easily distinguishable as Magical Girls.

“So you’re *sure* that the bank is connected to the Land of Magic?” asked one of them.

“Yes, I’m sure,” said another.

“Completely sure.”

“I *am* sure.”

“Cause I’m not really in it for the money, I just wanna shit over those sons of bitches in the Land of Magic.”

“We’re going to hit them, we’re hitting them hard, and we’re gonna cause a bit of trouble for the Land of Magic, too!”

“Remind me how we’re gonna not be identified again? We have pretty distinctive outfits,” said one of the girls.

“Black jackets, black clothes,” said the leader.

“And our *faces* ?”

One of the girls went towards a closet, opened it, and took out four black full-covered gas masks.

She threw them across the table.

“Gas masks?”

“Hey, shut up. It works.”

“Do we have a getaway car?”

“Why the hell do we need a getaway car?”

“To get away?”

“We’re Magical Girls, we can *run* , dipshit!”

“Oh... right.”

A doorbell rang out. A doorbell at this time? Nobody invited anyone. Who could that even be.

“Did any of you invite anyone?”

“No.”

“Secret meeting, remember.”

“I didn’t do anything.”

“Shit, is it Exam Division? Did we just get pre-busted.”

“They can’t arrest us if they don’t have proof!”

“Hey, shit-for-brains, the whole damn room’s *proof* ! We should hide it all before we answer the-”

“I’M COMING IIIIN~” said the voice from the door.

Slam!

The door kicked open, and there was a rockstar dressed Magical Girl, with a guitar by her hand. She was grinning happily.

“Wow, looks like I’m late to the party! You girls seem to have everything set up already! Niiice!”

The four girls quickly put on their gas masks and prepared to fight.

Tot Pop raised her arms, “Whoa whoa whoa there, gas mask girls! Chill, I’m not here to bust you or anything. I heard you wanna take down the Land of Magic,” said Tot Pop.

The girls looked at each other. Then they looked at Tot Pop, and they agreed.

“Alright, glad to know we’re cool. Nice gas mask uniforms by the way, very unified... I like it!”

30 Minutes later

“...More resource, more contacts, we spread out, the revolution’s gonna be everywhere!” said Tot Pop.

“I like it,” said one of the girls.

“This is bigger than we thought,” said another.

“Do we really have supporters?” asked one of them too.

“There’s lots of people who wanna reform the Land of Magic. Don’t worry, we’re just riding the wave. Stick with me, and we’ll start a revolution that’ll spark other revolutionaries! Starting with raiding this bank of yours!” said Tot Pop.

“Agreed!”

“Alright, Tot Pop. We’ll join you!”

“Perfect! I can see good things ahead of us, already...” said Tot Pop, grinning as she strummed her guitar.

To Surpass the Devil

**This story takes place many years before the
events of Magical Girl Raising Project**

There exists an organization among Magical Girls called the *Devil Investigation Team*. The purpose of this group was to figure out a way to defeat the Devil herself, Mao Pam.

Of course, that was their purpose on the surface. In truth, no one in this group knew the real purpose behind the formation of this organization.

The organization's mastermind was a Cyber Fairy by the name of Fav. He had a favorite Magical Girl, Clamberry.

The goal was simple. Get Clamberry into the top of the ranks by any means necessary. The end-game being that Clamberry will become qualified to be a selection test administrator.

Selection tests are important events. They help bring new Magical Girls to the Land of Magic. Selecting a candidate, and ensuring that those candidates meet the requirements, require a lot of planning and scrutiny if they want high quality Magical Girls.

As a result, test administrators tend to be selected by a peer-reviewed group, and you can't normally apply to be an administrator.

There are several conditions to boost your chances of becoming an administrator.

Firstly, becoming a veteran Magical Girl. That definitely earns you points. Years of experience is required before you even choose the right people.

Then, there's also personal recommendations by a variety of Division heads. The recommendations are highly valued, but of course, each recommender has their own way of judging you.

Thus, it's extremely rare for a rookie Land of Magic worker to be selected as administrator, and given the fact that you'd need to be a good Magical Girl to even become a Land of Magic sanctioned worker, you can imagine it's quite hard.

Fav needed Clamberry to become a test administrator if the plans that they had in mind were going to continue.

Fav was a trusted member of the selection committee, able to give a high recommendation of praise for Clamberry. Leverage included her ability to defeat a demon in her own selection test.

But Fav's praise and recommendation wasn't enough. Clamberry still needed more before she could be admitted.

The easiest one to get so far... is a recommendation from Mao Pam, the leader of the Mao School.

The Mao School is a private organization comprised of powerful and strong Magical Girls. Undoubtedly the best of the best in terms of fighting ability.

Clamberry was part of this school, and of course, a wonderful student herself.

Their leader was Mao Pam, who was the most powerful Magical Girl of the current generation. She was also the head of the Foreign Affairs Division, who tends to do things diplomatically.

Needless to say, some were quite worried that the Mao's School is some kind of private army, though Pam insists that it's merely an after-school club kind of organization.

There were two ways to graduate from Mao's School.

The first is to get noticed enough by Mao Pam that she personally graduates you. This takes a lot of time and effort.

The second is to be able to land one hit on Mao Pam. The hit must be a damaging hit, and not something that was blocked by her.

Of the 10 graduates of Mao's School, most have passed through the former method, as none have actually managed to land a damaging hit on Pam yet.

The insurmountable wall that is Mao Pam can be hard to fight for some, coupled with the fact that she is heavily restraining herself, so that she won't kill her students.

Fav believes that with Clamberry, there will be a way for her to land a damaging blow. All it would take is one hit. Just one hit. Clamberry's physical strength and agility are good, and her powers make her one of the better candidates for this.

All he needs to do is give her an opening.

It was Fav who urged Clamberry to participate in Mao's School in the first place, and Clamberry certainly does enjoy her fights there, but she lacks what she wants, and Fav lacks what he wants.

Clamberry wants a death match, Fav wants to witness one. Mao's School provides powerful opponents, but none of them are willing to kill.

So Fav needed Clamberry to graduate, so that she'll become an administrator, and a better plan can be formed.

To do that, he needed to find an opening.

Mao Pam was near-impossible to defeat, but thankfully, she was nothing if not generous. It's too generous of her to allow a graduation method via a successful hit.

Fav will take advantage of that.

As a Cyber Fairy, Fav lives within the administrator's phone that Clamberry possesses, but he has access to the internet.

Files saved from the previous admins, and the previous ones, and previous ones. Connecting them to the Land of Magic, spreading contacts, Magical Girls who also wanted to beat Pam.

Weeks of research, and all of them supervised and watched over by Fav, who silently watched, and gave intelligence to Clamberry.

No matter how high you are in the Magical Girl ladder, you are still once human. Magical Girls always start out as humans, and Mao Pam is no different.

Somewhere, she has to have a life outside of being a Magical Girl, or at least some kind of entertainment value.

Hobbies, personal likes, dislikes, there has to be something that Mao Pam was into other than Land of Magic things.

Fav opened the first few video files in the group's shared page.

The title was *'Mao Pam takes a walk'*

The video started off normally, with what seems to be a park in the Land of Magic. Mao Pam was in full view.

The way she looked was... well, unorthodox. She had large black wings covering her, but otherwise there was minimal clothing.

But the Land of Magic doesn't discriminate, so it's not like Magical Girls have to be formal, as long as they're efficient.

Mao Pam was jogging in the park. She seemed to enjoy the morning walk. The camera was recorded in secret. Probably a Magical Girl already in the park, part of the group.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, a Magical Girl came down to strike Pam, heading in with a kick launched towards her.

Pam caught her legs, and immediately slammed her down to a park bench, destroying it.

The Magical Girl must have wanted to score a hit on Pam, but it didn't seem to work. Pam then began ruthlessly beating up on the poor girl, who was trying her hardest to escape.

Pam held her down with one arm, and punched her in the face repeatedly with the other arm.

"AUGH, Gak! Agh... Stop! STOP! I give up! Oof! GAH... Please..."

"You chose the place, you chose the time, now you must submit to your fate," said Pam smiling warmly at her.

Mao Pam punched her and punched her, until the Magical Girl fell unconscious.

The rest of the park goers stared at Pam. A Mage who was sitting on the bench was now standing in disbelief.

He was a bearded old man, kind of looked like a classic wizard. Pam bowed down to him, "Sorry for the trouble, I'll be sure to pay for the bench and any damages me and my student has caused," she said politely.

She slung the unconscious Magical Girl on her back and went on her way.

Mao Pam's senses were sharp. It's hard to sneak up on her. You'd need to attack her with something that couldn't be heard and couldn't be seen. Clamerry could control sound, but she needed to be smart if she didn't want to end up like this girl.

The next video is titled ' *Even Mao Pam hates work* '.

It showed Mao Pam somewhere, typing at a laptop. It looks like some Foreign Affairs stuff on the screen.

Mao Pam's typing was slow, she seemed to look at each of the keyboards one by one before typing it per finger.

Even then, she sometimes stumbled.

"My, I didn't mean that."

"Oh dear, that's not what I wanted to type at all"

"Gah, stupid keyboard."

She would mutter out loud, as she erased her words and typed again and again.

Eventually, she gave up, and put her laptop away. Instead, she pulled out a notebook, and began smiling.

She opened the notebook, and twirled her pencil over and over.

She seemed to be thinking, thinking very hard.

She tapped her pencil to her chin, tapping her fingers to the table. She wrote something, but then she erased it.

She wrote something again, but then she scratched it off, then realized it was messing up her notebook, so she erased it.

The camera got a closer look at the notebook.

Fav paused the video, it seemed to be a list of names.

Oh, these were Mao's School students.

Lake of Fire Flame Flamey

Dark Fang Limit

Blue Dragon Panasu

The Flower Vendor, Marika Fukuroi

Twin Stars Cutie Altair

Then the name she tried so hard to find.

After a few minutes of thinking, she had an 'Aha!' moment, and quickly wrote down the name that she had in mind.

The Forest Musician, Clamberry .

The next video is titled ' *Mao Pam and Technology* '

This was during a meeting with several head Divisions. It seems Research and Development has created a new gadget, the Magical Phone.

The recording is high quality, and seems to have been some kind of meeting archive, uploaded into the site.

This must be during when Magical Phones were first invented.

Mao Pam looked down at her desk, the Magical Girl leading the meeting had instructed the Division heads on how the Magical Phone makes it easier to access each other, and also introduced administrator phones, which can be linked to Magical Girls in their selection tests.

Mao Pam touched her phone, she clicked some buttons, and then...

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP

“Um...” she said,

Everyone stared at her. Mao Pam stared back.

“I uh... Ehe, well, excuse me while I...”

She tapped the screen. The beeping got louder.

“...How do you turn this off?” asked Mao Pam with blushed cheeks and an embarrassed smile.

The other Magical Girls tried their best not to look disappointed.

The next video is titled ‘ *Mao Pam battle training* ’.

It showed a large battle in a secluded area in the forest. There were two teams, attackers and defenders.

The defenders had to guard the house from being attacked, and the attackers needed to raid the house.

Mao Pam watched as she folded her arms, floating in the sky.

“Focus your attacks! Look for openings! Defense, your left flank is open! Pay more attention! Utilize your powers!” she screamed out.

Fireballs, arrows, beams, Magical Girls fighting each other, trying to make their way through to the other side.

The next video was ‘ *Mao Pam is really bad with tech* ’.

It was Mao Pam sending in her laptop and Magical Phone over to Research and Development, scratching her head a bit as she tried to explain how she broke it by not understanding how to fix something.

It was almost comical how little she understood, but she was too nervous to ask for help in fixing it, since she didn’t want to be seen as being unable to do something that the newer generations can do easily.

So she went over to repair it herself.

Finally, she received a new Magical Phone, and a laptop, after a few weeks of fast forwarding timeskip.

Grateful and very embarrassed, Mao Pam went back home.

The next video was called ‘ *Mao Pam relaxes* ’.

It’s a video taken in the library, at a private study booth. There, Mao Pam seems to have a couple of books and some notes down as well.

The books were all mythological or religious-based books.

The Bible, The Quran, The Torah, The Odyssey, The Epic of Gilgamesh, Egyptian Tablets, The Book of the Dead, and a variety of folklore, myth, and legend texts.

Mao Pam didn’t seem like a woman of faith, but she had a lot of interest in religion and mythology for some reason...

...Fav wondered why.

It seems that whenever she read the books, she seems like she’s enjoying a really good story, and then she takes out her pen and writes down something in her notebook occasionally, excited at it too.

The Magical Girl with the camera walked over to get a closer look with her camera, and the notebook had a variety of words, *Mastema*, *Lucifer*, *Cocytus* in it.

All names from some of those books and scriptures.

Wonder what *that* ’s all about.

There was still no foreseeable weakness to be found... or was there?

The next video was called ‘*Poor Mao Pam* ’. Again, there seems to be a pattern with Mao Pam and technology.

This one showed her hard at work on her laptop, and the camera is shown behind her shoulder.

She was a bit frustrated here, tinkering with her laptop. It seemed to have frozen, so she must want to reset it.

The date is set later than the time she had to fix her laptop last time, so this must be... what, the third time or more?

As she tinkered with her laptop, there was some sounds and noises. Pam took a look at her screen to see what was going on, and...

...The screen went blue.

Pam clicked on the mouse. Nothing was working.

After a while, Pam groaned and hit her head on her desk in defeat.

So Mao Pam really wasn't good with technology, huh?

The next video was called ' *Meetings with Mao Pam* '.

It's another quality recorded video of a meeting room in the Land of Magic. The head of the meeting was trying to explain... something.

Fav couldn't really understand what she was saying, but it must've been some issue or another.

Fav focused on Pam, and saw that Pam was slowly nodding off, only to wake up again suddenly.

It seems like even *she* doesn't like the droning long days of meetings, where almost nothing gets done, and everything is boring.

Fav can sympathize with that.

Pam was trying hard not to fall asleep. Magical Girls don't need to sleep, but that doesn't mean they can't be bored to sleep. That part seems to be normal no matter what you are.

Fav fast-forwarded, since he was also starting to get bored of the video

At the end of the meeting, the head asked a question, and Pam's eyes shot wide open. She looked confused, she probably had no idea what just happened.

Everyone raised their hands in agreement, and Pam just followed along, not really sure of what was going on.

Interesting...

The next video is titled ‘ *Mao Pam and Tech, Part 3* ’.

Here, Mao Pam is dressed very fancily, in a black dress, sunglasses, and nice fancy tipped hat.

She’s going to the R&D facility. Fav knows this facility, it’s where he was born all those years ago.

Mao Pam handed over a written letter to one of the Magical Girls working there, and she looked at it with some confusion.

“You sure you want this?” she asked.

“Yes, please,” said Pam.

The video then cut and moved to Pam somewhere else. She was opening a large cardboard box.

Oh, this must be her trying to replace her laptop. Guess she didn’t want to be too embarrassed about breaking it again, so she decided to replace it instead of fixing it.

But what she opened was...

...A microwave.

Fav knew it was a microwave, Pam seemed to be confused. She opened the box, took out the metal parts and stared at it for about 2 to 3 whole minutes, blinking dumbfounded.

She read the instructions, and just looked at the parts, not knowing what to do.

She may have written the wrong model, and got a microwave instead of a new laptop instead.

Fav had seen enough. He had downloaded all the necessary files and videos, and reappeared in another phone.

A secluded forest retreat, the home of his favorite, Clamberry.

“These are all the things you need to know about Mao Pam, Pon!”

“And there’s something I can use here?”

“Of course, Pon!”

“I’ll go have a look, then”

“So you have a plan, Pon?”

“We’ll see...”

Three days later, Fav played a video,

‘ Up-and-Comer challenges Mao Pam in graduation match ’.

He played the video.

Mao Pam and Clamberry were starting at a distance of five meters apart. Both Magical Girls bowed.

Clamberry wasted no time, rushing in to Mao Pam.

Pam blocked her first kick with her wings, her punch as well. Clamberry tried to blow through Pam’s wings with her soundwaves, but it won’t budge.

Instead, the wings managed to slam Clamberry away from Pam.

Clamberry relied on speed and skill, trying her best to fight one-on-one with Pam, but Pam was too fast, dodging every attack completely, blocking every soundwave that Clamberry made.

Pam flew away, Clamberry used her sound to amplify Pam’s location.

But it didn’t matter. Pam was too fast.

Suddenly, Pam reappeared behind Clamberry, and launched a kick to her back that sent her flying towards a tree.

Clamberry slammed through the tree, and tumbled through the grass, leaving a trail of blood where she landed.

Blood had shown on Clamberry's face. She wiped it with her arm, and Clamberry smiled, "Hahaha! Good fight. You're still going to continue?" asked Pam.

"Of course..." replied Clamberry.

She launched a large soundwave with both palms, but Pam blocked it with a wall made of her wings.

When she opened her wings, Clamberry was gone.

A distraction.

Pam used her instincts, moving away from her spot. Sure enough, Clamberry had instantly landed and created a small crater-shaped hole where Pam was.

In response, Pam's wings turned to tentacles, each holding Clamberry's limbs. The tentacles moved in to crush Clamberry's limbs, as Clamberry screamed in pain.

Pam went in, pummeling Clamberry in the torso. Each punch making Clamberry cough up blood.

Each punch to the torso was heard with a crack, each punch was made to be the last, it took all of Clamberry's strength as her eyes bulged and she gritted her teeth to withstand the pain.

Pam then punched Clamberry in the face multiple times, and Clamberry became even more and more bruised.

The punches made Clamberry lose her focus, her eyes weren't able to focus on one thing anymore, it's clear that Clamberry was fighting to stay conscious.

Finally, she released the tentacles, grabbed Clamberry by the neck, and slammed Clamberry against a tree.

Clamberry was hurt badly. Her body was weakened, damaged heavily by Pam's relentless punishment.

Each blow was like hard concrete. Clamberry's body was as broken as a stick being pummeled by a hammer.

Still, she tried... She tried to stand...

There were some comments on the video at this time, passing to the left of the screen, ' *Clamberry's still going huh?*'

'She's determined, I'll give her that'

Clamberry struggled to get up. Fav could tell that her bones were probably shattered as she groaned in pain, trying her best to even stand up.

Pam allowed it, she liked spirit in her students.

Clamberry's breathing is heavy, and she coughed up blood as she breathed in and out.

She looked at Pam, and charged at her. Pam prepared her defenses, but...

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP

An alarm on Pam's Magical Phone.

Pam motioned a 'stop' palm, and Clamberry stopped her advance, stopping to catch a breath, and agreeing to a standstill.

Pam checked her Magical Phone.

But there was no alarm...

...Wait, what?

Clamberry instantly resumed her charge, getting past the range of Pam's wings. The beeping was a trick played by Clamberry's powers.

Since Pam didn't understand much of technology, she had to check to make sure. She wouldn't know if she set an alarm or not.

Clamberry aimed for a fist at Pam's face, but Pam was faster.

She caught Clamberry's fist with her palms, catching Clamberry's punch, grasping her fist tightly, and twisted Clamberry's arm.

“GRAAAH!” screamed out Clamberry in pain, as she fell on one knee, her right arm broken from the twist.

Pam smiled, “Good try, Clamberry,” she said.

Clamberry smiled.

Suddenly.

A shockwave.

Pam was blown back. Clamberry had made contact with Pam’s hand, which means she made contact with Pam’s body.

Sound travels not just through air, but also through surface vibrations too. When travelling through the body, its effects are arguably far worse.

Clamberry didn’t need her attack to hit, she just needed to make contact with Pam.

Pam was blown away, but she flipped backwards and landed pretty safely... However...

When Pam tried to move her hand, she groaned in pain. A bone was jutting out of her right arm.

She widened her eyes, and then she looked at Clamberry, and she smiled.

Clamberry was on her knees, body in pain, completely torn apart, unable to stand anymore. She fell to the ground, each breath feeling more painful than the last.

Pam chuckled to herself. She carefully supported her arm on a tree, and forcefully set the bone inside herself, a loud crack and small groaning of pain from Pam, but nothing too big.

Pam approached Clamberry, and helped her up, supporting her as she stood up.

Clamberry’s right arm was broken, and she was visibly in pain when Pam touched her right arm, so Pam grabbed her shoulders instead.

“Congratulations, Clamberry,” said Pam with a big smile.

“ *Huff... Cough...* Ngh... Thank you... *Huff ...*” said Clamerry, eyes swollen, hardly able to stand herself.

“You used your Magic well and creatively, the sign of a true adaptable warrior. I hereby graduate you from my school,”

Clamerry smiled and nodded, then she coughed and puked some blood, as her breathing became course.

“Haha, don’t go out on me yet, my Forest Musician. I’m proud of you. You’re a newcomer, but you’ve come so far. I’ve always known that you had potential,” said Pam.

“Th... Thank you... Ngh...”

“Don’t force yourself. This should be a joyous occasion. If you ever want a proper rematch, however. I’ll be happy to oblige, though of course, in a real fight, you would’ve been dead already, so I hope you understand that there needs to be some strategy rather than just to hit me once,” said Pam.

Clamerry laughed, but each laugh made her hurt even more.

The rest of the Magical Girls watching around them rushed towards Clamerry, cheering that one of their fellow classmates had graduated.

They were happy for her.

“Congratulations!”

“Wow, you’re gonna do great in the Land of Magic”

“It’s always the quiet ones, huh?”

“Good job... Forest Musician”

Everyone supported Clamerry, cheered for her. Mao Pam was proud for her.

“Let it be known that the Forest Musician, Clamerry, has passed my school, and thus has earned my respect!” said Mao Pam.

Clamerry had long gone unconscious, unable to support her own weight and pain at that skirmish.

“Let’s give her a rest. She deserves it,” said Pam.

“What are you gonna do now, Pon?” asked Fav, stopping the video.

“I’ve graduated,” said Clamerry.

“Now we can be administrators, Pon!”

“Yes... now we can.”

“Something wrong, Pon?”

“...I’m going to miss them,” said Clamerry.

“They were your type, Pon.”

“They were fun... It was very fun, actually,” said Clamerry, seemingly sad that she had to go.

She had recovered in this place for three days, since that’s how badly she was beaten up when trying to challenge Mao Pam.

“I hope you give me some fun too, Fav,” said Clamerry.

“But of course, Pon! After all, that’s my goal as well, Pon!”

Rainbow Friendship

**This story takes place a few months before
Magical Girl Raising Project: Limited**

She couldn't avoid the high kick.

If only she could put out her rainbows, this wouldn't be a problem. Unfortunately, she had to block every hit with her hands, and she's not good at that kind of combat.

She blocked the incoming kick with her arms, but the strength of the other girl sent her flying, her back hitting a chainlink fence, and bursting through it.

She burst and rolled off in the concrete, creating small craters where she landed.

Blood was leaking across her face. If she could use her rainbows, she could've broken her fall, but nothing's coming out, no matter what she tried.

There was no light either. Everything was dark.

A large slab of concrete was thrown at her, and she immediately punched through it instinctively, but the force still knocked her back.

There was darkness, and she could only see small silhouettes of her opponent.

This was going to be hard, but Rain Pou understood what the other Magical Girl can do.

Light Control . The other Magical Girl can control sources of light and make them disappear completely.

Unfortunately, since Rain Pou's rainbows are made of light, that meant that Rain Pou couldn't use her rainbows at all. Taking away her rainbows is like taking away her weapons *and* her armor.

More large pieces of gravel were being thrown towards her, but this time Rain Pou dodged them.

Even though she couldn't see them, she could still hear them.

Multiple chunks were being thrown, and she dodged them left and right.

She used her hearing to predict where the Magical Girl would be, tracing the source of the throws, like a string in the darkness.

She ran towards, moving as fast as she can, faster than she usually ran, avoiding any chunks of concrete thrown at her, using that to track down the Magical Girl.

Toko always told her, the power of Magical Girls lies in their imagination, so Rain Pou imagined her target, imagined where she would be.

And when she reached her location...

...She used her momentum as leverage, and launched a kick straight to the center of the supposed target.

Crack!

She felt her feet burst through flesh, and the sound of spine cracking.

The darkness evaporated, and light in the dark streets slowly returned once more. The Magical Girl opponent, a woman clad in black, looked down at the large wound in her chest.

Rain Pou had missed her intended target. She had just wanted to stun her, but it looked like she killed her...

She went limp, eyes wide, and detransformed.

She became a human again, dead on the street.

A school uniform. This was a middle school girl.

Rain Pou looked at the body, she closed her eyes and shook her head.

Shit...

This wasn't in her job description.

She was supposed to be stealing information, not killing anyone. That Magical Girl was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

"Rain Pou! Rain Pou! You're alive! I saw the whole fight from one of the apartments!"

A voice was heard from afar. The voice was from the sky, quite small actually, if you didn't have the hearing of Magical Girls.

That's because the voice came from a small creature. A miniature girl. A Fairy.

Her name was Toko, and she was Rain Pou's mascot.

"You saw the fight? How'd you see the fight? Didn't she remove all light?" asked Rain Pou.

"Oh, I just used this new function in Magical Phones to detect Magical Potential in a short range area, like a radar," said Toko.

"Ah... Alright. Well, anyway, that girl's magic seemed to immediately counter mine. Was it an accident or was it planned?" asked Rain Pou.

"Whaddya mean?"

"When I went in here as a Magical Girl, I met her immediately and we went on the wrong terms. Considering her powerset, I don't know if someone hired her or not. Was this a setup?"

"I could have a word with our boss! I'll ask later on!"

When Rain Pou first entered the world of Magical Girls, she didn't really think much of them.

She thought they were just children's fantasies at first.

Now, however, she was part of this world's society, and of all the parts where she was, it wasn't the glamorous lives up above, but the seedy underbelly below.

There are plenty of villainous Magical Girls.

Bribery, whistleblowers, backstabblings, and various other things that some Magical Girls do behind the scenes. Rain Pou was often hired to kill these people.

But Rain Pou doesn't place herself in a higher pedestal, nor does she have any delusions about who she is.

She knows she's not a substitute for justice. She knows she's not a vigilante. She's knows she's just as bad as the people she's being hired to kill.

Rain Pou is a rogue who kills other rogues.

Usually, she was hired by higher-ups in the Land of Magic, who want to get their hands dirty without being publically outed. Rain Pou's jobs were also not publically outed.

These kinds of people exist in any society, even one as fantastical as the Land of Magic.

One day, Toko came to her with a job offer.

"I've got something! But before that, we might wanna have some insurance?" said Toko.

"Insurance? What do you mean insurance?"

"We make a group of Magical Girls to help us. We shouldn't tell them the reason of course, but it's a good way to bolster our ranks. Also, if we get caught, they'll be useful meat shields too!" said Toko.

"You expect me to find a group of girls willingly to help?"

"Let *me* handle the Magical Potential and people, you just do the friendship thingy," said Toko.

"Seems unnecessarily bothersome," said Rain Pou.

Rain Pou laid down in her bed.

She rested a bit, but she enjoyed a life of thrills and fun. She didn't want to go back to whatever she had before.

Before Middle School, Rain Pou had to live with an abusive older sister, and always had to act like she was okay. She wasn't allowed to be her own person, and always had any sense of free will crushed.

So when she became a Magical Girl, she immediately ran off to do her own thing. She was grateful and happy to be rid of that bitch. However, the life that she had to live now was also an acting game.

If the Land of Magic ever caught wind of any of her real actions, she would immediately lose her status as a Magical Girl, go back to being an ordinary human, and probably have to see her sister again.

Rain Pou didn't want any of that.

So Rain Pou followed Toko's advice and philosophy. Toko taught her how to have fun and become her own person.

She slowly led her to the life of where she is, now.

When she first killed someone, she puked and felt sick for days. However, as she killed more, she became desensitized.

She learned how to detach herself from any potential targets. When she was on the job, feelings for someone will be a weakness. That's why she never had any delusions that she was a hero.

It was easier to know the reality. She was a rogue Magical Girl, and she was killing other Magical Girls in her job. It made it easier to handle if you're not emotionally attached.

But now Toko's asking her to make friends so that she can use them as backup and a potential failsafe?

That meant slowing down. That meant opening up herself. That meant showing attachment to someone else.

She looked at Toko, "So what do you want me to do?"

"Well, I've detected only a small few that have Magical Potential in the school. Some are mediocre, some are ridiculously low, some come in pairs, some are loners. Oh, one of the teachers also has potential, and it's easy to leverage her if her students are also Magical Girls. *Your job* is to be friends with those loners!"

"Huh?"

"I can easily handle the ones that come in pairs, don't worry. It's the loners that's gonna be hard to catch. I've got a list of them here. Your mission, pick one and get close to her," said Toko.

"How the hell am I supposed to do that?"

“You figure it out! I already did the legwork of actually finding these girls and rounding it down for you!”

Toko had taught Rain Pou many things.

How to fight, how to survive, how to live freely.

Not how to make friends.

“I can’t just *make friends* . It’s not that easy,” said Rain Pou.

“Talk to them, then!”

“I don’t have anyone close to me, that’s the point! *You* taught me that!” said Rain Pou.

“You have me!”

“You hardly count, Toko.”

“Well... there’s a first time for everything, right?”

Rain Pou sighed, and looked at the list of girls that Toko made, all names.

“Tatsuko Sasaki... what grade is she?”

“She’s your classmate!” said Toko.

“What!? You’re shitting me!”

Apparently, she wasn’t shitting her.

Tatsuko Sasaki was indeed a classmate of Kaori Ninotsugi, AKA Rain Pou.

Kaori may not be good at making friends, but she knew how to analyze social situations.

Most of the girls here have had friends with other girls, but Tatsuko was always alone in her chair.

She never talked to anyone at all.

Perhaps she was a bit like Kaori in a sense? Maybe she was hiding something from the world, or maybe she was just shy.

Her expressions don't really show much, and it didn't give any hint of what she was like. She was an enigma.

She always did push everyone away from her.

During breaktime, Kaori watched Tatsuko's actions closely, being careful not to be spotted herself.

Tatsuko always went to lunch alone, went to the toilet alone, went to the library to read books alone. Nobody noticed her, and nobody really even cared.

Was this girl really that lonely?

Not even Kaori noticed her at first, not until Toko told her about Tatsuko. Perhaps this girl really did need someone.

Toko approached Rain Pou back at her room.

"Well? How was she?"

"Bad. I don't think she's useful, even if she has potential. Nobody noticed her, and I don't think she's capable of fighting if things get rough," said Rain Pou.

"Well, shit. Guess you gotta find someone else, then," said Toko.

"I told you I'm not good at making friends."

"You're just not trying hard enough! Either you get close to her, or find someone else. Either way, I'm taking what you have."

"A little help would be nice," said Rain Pou.

"Can't help you, too busy dealing with other girls in the school."

"Fucking fairy..."

“Hey, I’m not lying, look at this, I already narrowed down our targets, in only a few days, *you* on the other hand, only needed to find one. If anything, *you’re* the lazy one,” said Toko.

She threw a piece of paper towards Rain Pou, and Rain Pou looked at the names on the list.

Umi Shihabara, a very rowdy girl. She had high physicals that could be useful in a fight.

Kayo Nemura, always sticking around with Umi. She was level-headed and calm, good for controlling Umi as well as possibly planning things out.

Nozomi Himeno, the obligatory teacher. At first, Rain Pou thought she was a student when she met her in the entrance ceremony, due to her babyface, but apparently not. Magical Girl who’s a teacher, that’s interesting.

And Mine Musubiya, a class representative who’s good at dealing out tasks and stuff. Probably the leader type, being a class rep and everything.

And on Kaori’s end, Tatsuko Sasaki.

It’s strange that Kaori never noticed Tatsuko, when Kaori put emphasis on making sure her school life goes great.

“See? I’m actually doing work. So you either stop what you’re doing and find someone more useful to be a Magical Girl, or you befriend that Tatsuko girl. The more Magical Girls we have, the better,” said Toko.

How did she get under her radar before? Was she truly just a lonely girl, like Kaori was, hiding something before.

Magical Girl or not, Kaori actually wanted to get close to her.

Tatsuko didn’t show any openings, though... There has to be a way of talking with her.

There has to be a way to get close.

Kaori observed Tatsuko at lunch. Kaori could try to speak up with her, but whenever she did, Kaori herself would get nervous.

Kaori's friendships were never started by herself. People always came up to her, and she accepted them in her circle. Keeps the school masquerade open, and is also easy to do.

So now, Kaori being the active one... That's harder.

It seems that Tatsuko likes omelettes for lunch. She ate them everyday. When she ate, she seemed to enjoy the food, although she didn't smile to show it.

She really does hide her feelings.

Maybe if Kaori made omelettes, she'll be closer with her.

At home, Kaori started cooking. She only learned a bit from Home Economics, but she also browsed several cooking sites, and tried to understand the recipe from there.

This is her first time cooking an omelette, too. This is harder than she thought.

When she thought she finished, she tasted it, and it burned in her mouth.

Well, the omelette plan won't work. Let's try another plan.

It was the rainy season, and what better way to get close to someone than to walk with them sharing an umbrella?

She had to make sure the situation was perfect. She checked the weather forecasts every day, and made sure to be prepared when it was heavily raining.

Finally, on a rainy day, Tatsuko came to school with an umbrella. Now to make sure it still rained after-school.

Kaori had an umbrella of her own, and during classtime, after everyone placed their umbrellas in umbrella stands, Kaori excused herself, saying that she felt a bit sick.

Outside, she transformed into Rain Pou, took Tatsuko's umbrella, and hid it somewhere, then she detransformed and slept in the nurse's office for most of the day.

All according to plan.

When it was time to go back home, Tatsuko was nervously looking for her umbrella.

The plan was simple, offer an umbrella to Tatsuko, and bond with her. That was easy, right?

When Tatsuko had given up, Kaori approached her.

"Hey, lost your umbrella? Wanna go home together? I've got mine," said Kaori.

Tatsuko widened her eyes, and she immediately shook her head, smiling too, "N-No thanks, I'm good," she said.

Kaori was stunned.

Tatsuko simply walked outside and walked home in the cold rain.

She'd rather be wet and cold than make friends...

What kind of life did Tatsuko have to be like this?

Kaori actually felt bad for this plan now, at first, she thought Tatsuko was just weak and timid, but no one that's weak and timid would walk on the rain willingly...

...Tatsuko's stronger than she thought.

Gym class.

Dodgeball.

Tatsuko disliked dodgeball, Kaori didn't mind it. However, Kaori noticed Tatsuko's expression, just standing from the crowd.

Maybe this time Kaori can do it. Maybe this time Kaori can actually be friends with her!

The gym teacher placed Kaori and Tatsuko in the same teams.

Ah yes! Kaori had a plan. Kaori found dodgeball to be fairly easy, thanks to her lifetime experience of combat training.

So her plan was simple...

...If Tatsuko was about to be thrown a dodgeball, Kaori would immediately take the hit, and save her!

That would be great!

She'd go, "Oh Kaori-Chan! You saved me!"

What she thought and the reality of the situation, however, was completely different. Apparently, nobody even targeted Tatsuko even if she was standing completely still.

Was she *that* unnoticeable?

Of course, she barely fought back, but she wasn't even thought of as an easy target.

At least give the girl a fair shot!

But Kaori can't give up. She fought back against the enemy team, dodging and throwing the balls as well as possible.

She made sure not to allow her teammates access to the ball, and one by one, her teammates were eliminated.

If it's only Kaori and Tatsuko, then Tatsuko will *have* to be targeted.

Then, as it whittled down to two of them, Kaori finally was ready. She dodged every ball, threw it back everytime, and waited for the one moment where Tatsuko would be targeted.

The enemy team was dwindling, why was everyone aiming for Kaori? She hasn't let a dodgeball through yet.

Why isn't anyone aiming for...

...Huh?

Kaori looked behind her, and saw no one.

Tatsuko was in the outfield. Why was she in the outfield? She wasn't hit with anything yet.

Suddenly, a wave of dodgeballs came crashing towards Kaori.

The coach rang the whistle.

Kaori had asked the coach as to why Tatsuko was in the outfield when she wasn't technically out.

"She went there herself," said the coach.

"What? That's against the rules!"

"Tatsuko's not the sports type, even I know this. You were doing 90% of the team's work, and Tatsuko felt like she wasn't necessary. Since she's not physically fit, I decided it's fine."

...So Kaori's plan backfired.

But what kind of life was Tatsuko living? To be ignored by almost everyone and considered useless...

...That's not fair for anyone.



One day in class, Kaori saw Tatsuko reading a manga. A manga?

It was a shonen manga, it was some kind of mecha manga as well. Kaori instantly went back home and found the manga online.

Maybe...

...Maybe this is her chance of talking to her!

Maybe now Kaori can befriend Tatsuko!

She found out the name of the manga, she found out the next release date of the next volume.

She found out the characters, and of course, she read the manga herself.

If there was one way to befriend Tatsuko this would be it.

It didn't even matter what the original reason was, anymore. Tatsuko's life was unfair. It's not right to be shunned by everyone like that.

It's not right for everyone to just ignore your state, no matter who you are.

Kaori's going to be close to her.

Kaori's going to befriend her for sure.

Besides, Toko said it was for insurance, that doesn't mean it'll come true, right? Tatsuko deserved a happy life, and Kaori was going to try and give her that happiness.

Toko lied down on the bed. Unlike Magical Girls, fairies actually need sleep.

Days had gone by since the first time Toko had suggested that list. Soon, they'd have to do the job.

Ah... peace and quiet

Or so Toko thought.

SLAM!

The door opened. Toko's eyes awoke, and she was grumpy.

There, on the door, was Rain Pou crying and crying.

"FUCK! Why do people just ignore her like that? She doesn't even try to socialize if I bring her close to others too, I try to talk to her but she just won't let me in! God, she's just playing with my mind right now, Toko. Hey! Toko! Are you listening to me!?"

“What the hell are you crying about?” asked Toko.

“Tatsuko!”

“I thought you said she wasn’t fit. You shouldn’t be making unnecessary friendships, Rain Pou.”

“Well... I guess I changed my mind.”

“You’re sure?”

“...I ...I guess.”

“Well, I could always just give her the old fairy speech anyways, she’ll come aound,” said Toko.

“NO! Don’t do that! She doesn’t need that! She needs a real friend. She just needs someone she can talk to.”

“What the hell happened to you?”

“Can you teach me how to make omelettes? Please?”

“Wha?”

“It’s her favorite food... I wanna give it to her... Please, Toko?”

“If this is part of some convoluted plan...”

“No, I *really* think I can get close to her this way... Please? I wanna be her friend.”

Toko sighed.

“Fairies can’t make omelettes, but fine, as long as I can get some sleep afterwards.”

Beyond the Triangle

**This story takes place during Magical Girl
Raising Project: JOKERS**

“There’s something I wanna talk to you about. Is that okay?”

Princess Quake turned her head from the shonen manga she was reading to the source of the voice. She saw Princess Tempest looking with a serious face.

“I’m always here to lend a hand, Tempest,” said Quake.

“It’s advice. I need some advice. Is that okay?” asked Tempest.

Somewhere in the world, there exists another dimension. In that dimension, there existed invaders that threaten humanity.

These invaders were called *Disruptors* . They would attack the Earth every now and then, and cause untold amounts of chaos and destruction.

The only thing stopping them, the guardians of the Earth. The Magical Girls known as the *Pure Elements* .

Princess Tempest, the youngest of them, in Elementary School, with the power of wind by her side.

Princess Deluge, a Middle School girl, with the power of water by her side.

Princess Inferno, in High School, a powerful Magical Girl with the power of fire by her side.

And Princess Quake. The eldest of them, in College, with the power of earth by her side.

Thanks to Quake’s age and experience in the real world, she was unanimously considered their leader by the Pure Elements.

They were always ready in the Briefing Room in case any Disruptors chose to show up for that day. However, not all of them had to be there at all times.

Tempest, being in Elementary, had left school a bit early. Meanwhile, Quake, being in college, had a variable schedule that didn’t really follow any particular timetables.

Deluge and Inferno would be the ones that would arrive later in the day.

Still, Tempest asking Quake for advice? She seems far too old to be offering any Elementary-level advice.

Why not ask Deluge, who was comfortable and bright at all times?

Why not ask Inferno, who was much closer to Tempest than the other two?

Either way, Tempest was in need, and Quake wouldn't say no, even if she didn't think she was qualified.

But she was happy that Tempest approached her. She's wanted to help children like her for a long time, and nobody would judge her for helping Tempest.

Not like if she was outside. Considered a suspicious woman for taking too much of a liking for children and smiling upon seeing them.

Quake tried her best to act like the adult of the group. She sat on the table, put down the manga in front of her, and placed both her hands on her chin.

"Well then, Tempest. Let's begin. What's bothering you?"

Tempest blushed a bit.

"It's... love advice."

Quake's eyes widened.

"Er... Love advice?"

"Yes. It's about... a relationship. His name is Sho."

She's in Elementary School and she's already thinking about romance? She's *actually* 10 years too early for that.

"Well... Hmm... You've certainly got a big problem there," said Quake, unsure of what to say on the matter.

Elementary School romance isn't something that lasts long regardless. Serious romantic relationships tend to bloom either as early as Middle School or perhaps in High School.

Elementary Romance tends to be... one-time crushes. Still, Tempest seems serious about this, which Quake hasn't seen for a long time, so it's best not to take this too lightly, for her sake.

"So, what's the problem, Tempest?" asked Quake.

"I'm in a love triangle."

Oh my god.

You're in Elementary and not only are you thinking of romance, but you're in a *love triangle* !?

Princess Quake was 20 years old. In all those years, she has never been interested in love affairs at all.

"You have a special someone, Chiko"

"Anyone you like yet?"

She was just not interested in romance. Still, it makes sense why Tempest would think she was. A college aged girl with no romantic experience would be strange to a regular Elementary School kid like Tempest.

She probably thinks that Quake has had several dates in the past.

The truth is, even if Quake was interested in romance, she didn't exactly have a lot of friends who got along with her in the first place.

So even if she was interested in romance, she wouldn't know where to start.

But Elementary School romance is usually temporary. Having a crush on a kid you saw at the playground, running around to them and saying, "*Wanna get married when we're older?*" that kind of thing.

They usually erode after a few weeks. Sometimes they just become really close friends, laughing it off as a funny moment in their friendship.

But Tempest says she's in a love triangle.

And Tempest seems like she needs actual legitimate advice. Her eyes shone brightly, full of hope.

If Quake told her she has no experience, Tempest will be disappointed, and Quake couldn't possibly handle that.

Quake cleared her throat. Just this once, she'll pretend.

Princess Quake is the love master. The one who knows all about the secrets of a person's heart.

Princess Quake is able to become a matchmaker that can make *any* couple work.

And Quake will *definitely* help Tempest in her problems!

Who am I kidding, I have a Shonen manga right in front of me and I'm supposed to be the paramour of love!?

"Right, well... AHEM... A love triangle! Yes, that's... difficult... DIFFICULT, but not IMPOSSIBLE! So... The first uh... The first thing you should do-"

The door to the Briefing Room opened.

A red-on-black Magical Girl entered the room.

Princess Inferno .

Tempest immediately flew over to Quake and hugged her tightly.

"OH QUAKE! YOU'RE SO GREAT!"

Quake gulped. Tempest was so close Quake could feel her body temperature. So suddenly too.

Tempest whispered to Quake's ear.

"Talk later, I can't say anything with Inferno around. OH THANK YOU SO MUCH QUAKE! YOU HELPED ME A LOT! SEE YA AROUND!"

Tempest flew back to her seat fast as she could.

"Huh. You're pretty spunky today," said Inferno.

Can't talk with Inferno around?

Wait...

...Love triangle... with INFERNO?

This just gets better and better, doesn't it?

"Inferno! You're here early,ahaha!" said Tempest.

"I ran here as a Magical Girl. So I got here pretty fast today, yeah," said Inferno.

The two were talking as if nothing strange had happened. From Inferno's perspective, there probably really isn't anything strange going on.

"Quake? You okay? Your face looks funny," said Inferno.

"Wha? NOOO... I'm fine!" said Quake. She only just realized she was making a nervous dumbfounded smile when she realized who the third member of the love triangle was.

"You sure?"

"YEAH! Don't worry bout it Inferno it's just uh... Um... My favorite Manga got discontinued this week, so I guess I'm having an off day, yeah, haha!"

"Ah, the Mecha manga? I haven't read it myself, but it's a shame. I didn't realize it was cancelled. Sorry about that."

"Oh, it's fine..."

"Wonder why it got cancelled?" asked Inferno.

"Ohh it could be a number of things, y'know," said Quake.

"Y'know I actually checked the manga. I mean, the story's pretty okay, but honestly it felt really boring," said Inferno.

"Well... It tackles a lot of mature themes for a Mecha manga, y'know? It's not all action scenes and all that," said Quake.

"Well, I'm a High School student. I should be the right target audience. I didn't really get interested in that," said Inferno.

"Well, everyone has their own tastes. Maybe you're not into the Shonen-type stories."

"Oh, I read Shonen manga a lot," said Inferno.

“Maybe you’re more into the action scenes?”

“The action scenes in that Manga weren’t the best actually,” said Inferno.

Tempest sat down, “I actually read a bit of that manga. I don’t know what’s so interesting about it,” said Tempest.

“OKAY, let’s switch discussions,” said Quake, a little irritated.

The door opened once again. Two Magical Girls came in.

“Hey everyone!” said a blue Magical Girl, Princess Deluge.

“Did we miss anything?” said a radiant Magical Girl, Prism Cherry.

“Not much. Now that everyone’s here, we can all play in the training room, right!” said Tempest to Quake.

“H-Hey, Tempest. Combat training is *not* playtime!” said Quake sternly.

“But it’s fun! And we don’t really get hurt too badly, so it’s kinda like playtime, right?” argued Tempest.

She went behind Cherry and started pushing her.

“C’mon! Cherry can join us!” said Tempest.

“Eh!? Me? But I’m usually on Briefing Room duty!”

“It’ll be *fine* , c’mon, have some fun!” said Tempest.

Deluge laughed and ran after the two. Inferno shook her head and walked after them too.

“Wait, Inferno,” said Quake.

“Hm? What’s up, Quake?”

“I want to know about someone. A boy that you... probably know? His name’s uh... Sho?”

“Sho? Sho Minmida? How’d you know about-Oh, did Tempest ask you?” asked Inferno.

Inferno’s confused face turned into a mischievous sly smile.

“Well... A couple of months ago, probably last year actually, Tempest got some help from Sho on some things, and since then, that girl’s always been following him around. Few years ago it’s always been ‘ *Akari, Akari*’ but now it’s just ‘ *Sho, Sho* ’ with her. It’s a bit lonely, but she’s young and impressionable,” said Inferno.

Quake nodded. Not really knowing how to respond.

Inferno laughed. “C’mon, Tempest is gonna get mad if we’re late,” said Inferno smiling.

When they arrived at the briefing room. Cherry was already running as fast as possible from a speeding Tempest and Deluge chasing after her.

“Wow. Looks like we’re late to the party!” said Inferno, powering up as she joined in the fight.

Quake breathed a sigh, as she also joined in the combat simulation.

After the fight was over, Tempest approached Quake in the corner of the Training Room.

“So hey, about earlier...” said Tempest.

Quake tilted her head.

“You wanna know who Sho likes? I know who Sho likes...” said Tempest.

“Sure.”

“Sho likes... Sho likes Aka-nee. So... yeah.”

“Ah, Akari, huh?”

“Sho’s in Middle School, and I’m just an Elementary kid. But... if I become a Magical Girl, I can be the same age! Then we can actually meet up and be happy!” said Tempest.

Quake smiled and nodded. Tempest was still so young.

The love triangle thing was still on Quake’s mind, even as she got home. She tried her best to think of some solution to at least help

Tempest out.

She figured the best way would be to find out Sho's likes and dislikes.

This meant trying to study Sho, figuring out what he likes, who he likes, what he hates, who he hates, his hobbies, his lifestyle.

Yes... Quake's seen this all the time in Manga. This totally works.

First, Quake bought a baseball cap, and cut her hair short. Then, she bought a reversible jacket as well.

Perfect disguise. This will be good for tailing.

4 AM the next day, Quake biked out towards Inferno and Tempest's town. She also brought a briefcase. In the briefcase were some cameras as well as some manga to keep Quake busy.

She's going to try and find out everything she can about Sho... For Tempest.

She had heard that the school districts of this town were doing some garbage cleanup in the city, so she just had to follow the trail.

They started in the park, so Quake waited calmly, reading her manga while she put on her baseball cap, and hid closeby in the bushes.

Soon enough, kids from all over elementary to high school were gathered around the park.

Quake saw Tempest and Inferno, human forms of course. Inferno seemed to be the leader of one of the groups, being in High School.

Tempest was playing around with some Elementary school friends.

She also kept looking out at this specific boy in the Middle School group. She always seemed to stare at him, and look away if he looked closer.

That must be Sho .

"Alright, group up kids!" said one of the group leaders.

Quake took pictures of Sho. She was safe in how she did it. No flashes, no shutters. Just silent pictures with no noise and sound.

She was hidden behind the trees, she followed Sho's group wherever he went. He seemed to be talking with some of the boys his age.

He also went to Inferno.

Is this the love triangle?

Quake saw Sho talking with Inferno. The way he talked didn't imply any romantic feelings. Instead, he seemed to respect Inferno, and after a while, they separated.

So Tempest was wrong... Sho had no romantic feelings for Inferno. Perfect!

SNAP!

Quake noticed a snap in one of the trails near her. One of the student groups are going closer to the shrubbery she's hiding in, seeing if there's trash being hidden there.

Quake held her breath. She still had her suitcase on the ground, and she was nervous and sweating. She didn't want to be found.

She can't just transform to a Magical Girl either. She actually is trapped here.

The student group then left the bushes, and Quake breathed a sigh of relief. Park's not safe, better go spy through the alleys instead.

Quake ran off from the park, following Sho's group quietly as usual, and making sure she's looking as inconspicuous as possible.

That's when she saw something that made her freeze her tracks.

Inferno was talking with some girls up ahead.

The other students are just students, but Inferno had keen senses from being a Magical Girl. Quake can't possibly sneak past her.

She has to abort.

Her heartrate's racing up. She lost track of Sho's group.

Oh no.

Inferno walked off with the three girls towards Quake's direction. Quake quickly turned around and pulled her cap down, walking as fast as she can with her briefcase.

She walked towards the exit of the park, and when she saw a fence, she quickly climbed above it and jumped through it.

Please nobody see that

Still with her cap down, she moved towards another entrance of the park. Maybe this would be a better angle?

But then...

Suddenly...

Quake bumped into someone, and the sudden jolt made her drop her suitcase. That someone was just standing there in front of her, not really looking her way.

It was due to Quake always looking down with her cap on that she bumped into him.

That boy was...

...Sho.

Oh no.

Quake's heartrate increased again. She began sweating even more. This is worse than Inferno spotting her.

It's *Sho* . The boy she's spying on!

"Ah, sorry miss... I didn't see you..."

"Ahaha, it's okay!" said Quake.

Sho motioned to pick up something from the ground.

Oh no. He's going to find the SPYING EQUIPMENT!

Quake felt like she was going to faint. This was the end. She was going to get captured by the police. Spying on children picking up trash in a park with a shady outfit.

Come to think of it, she really didn't think this through.

Her reputation would be ruined. She won't see the Pure Elements again. It's all over for her.

"Hey, miss!" said Sho.

Oh, here it comes .

Quake was closing her eyes the whole time. She opened them, and she saw Sho look dumbfounded at something.

What is it? A camera? A recording device? Some kind of evidence that gives the wrong impression?

"...I didn't know you like this manga!" said Sho.



Oh...

He found Quake's manga first.

"Oh that? Yeah, I like that Manga."

"I LOVE this series! I've been looking for a fan of this series for so long! You have no idea how long it's been, haha!" said Sho.

"Oh... Well... Yeah, I guess it can be hard. I'm sure there's fans of it though," said Quake.

“Well, I tried sending postcards and emails. Pen pals on forums and stuff, but they all just kind of... faded away... Nobody I know likes this series, but I do, and I think it’s an awesome underappreciated series. It’s too bad it’s gonna get cancelled though,” said Sho.

“Oh, don’t worry. The author’s going to publish a special edition manga that’s going to explain everything. As a gift for the fans, free of charge online!” said Quake.

“What? Really? He is? Wow! I didn’t know that!”

“Yeah, he is. Also, if you want more, you should check the Raid Man Anime.”

“There’s a Raid Man Anime?” asked Sho.

“Oh yeah. It’s pretty old though, it was in my age. Raid Man was based on that manga series, but there’s some things changed up, and the Anime actually went with an Anime Original ending... Which kind of sucks, but it’s better than nothing, I guess, since it was new and the Manga’s still ongoing,” said Quake.

“What’s different about it?”

“The love interest is this other new girl instead of the one he had in the Manga. Raid Man doesn’t have the whole Death Arc, where he saves her from the underworld, so I don’t know *why* they removed that. Maybe the subject was too taboo. Oh, and some characters are kind of changed, but you can still see the similarities, if you’re really interested,” said Quake.

“Huh... I didn’t know that, I’ll give it a try,” said Sho.

“Sho! We’re going back in a few mins, you coming!?” yelled a girl from his group.

“Yeah, I’m coming! In a bit!”

Sho packed everything. The camera, the Manga, all of Quake’s belongings without even looking at Quake.

He then grabbed Quake’s arms.

“Excuse me, but... Do you mind if we share numbers? Or maybe e-mail addresses? I don’t wanna sound too fast but... I just wanna talk more about this series! It’s rare to find a fan like this!”

“Ah... Of course! I’m happy to share!”

Quake offered her cellphone and Sho offered his. They both shared numbers.

Sho was still holding Quake’s arm.

“Ah, sorry... Sorry,” said Sho blushing. He then waved goodbye and left.

Quake never felt more relieved in her life.

A couple of days later, the Pure Elements were all in the Briefing Room. Tempest was doing some Math homework, with Prism Cherry assisting her.

Quake still hasn’t contacted Sho, but maybe she will soon.

Her mission was successful. Not only did she get Sho’s personal contacts, but she became friends with him too.

Also, she found out Sho doesn’t actually have a crush on Inferno. That’s 2 points for Princess Quake.

She’s going to tell Tempest soon, and she’s going to help her with her endeavors.

This is nice. Even though Princess Quake wasn’t a love master. She was still going to play the role of Cupid. That’s something she’ll be happy to do.

There was talking, Inferno wanted to see Quake’s sketchbook, and in all the laughter, Tempest broke her pencil.

She said she’ll go over to her house to pick up a new pencil and be back later on.

Oh well, guess Quake will have to tell her later.

Tempest left the base. Princess Quake relaxed and closed her eyes. For once, she thought like she actually had some fun, helped someone out, and made some friends too.

Primula Farinosa

**This story takes place a few weeks after
Magical Girl Raising Project: JOKERS**

☆ Mariko Fukuroi

Mariko Fukuroi is a Magical Girl.

When she transforms, she becomes the battle-hungry Magical Girl known as *Marika Fukuroi*.

Marika is the type of person who lives how she wants.

Marika is the type of person who does what she wants.

Everyone that met Marika would always say,

“Ah, this girl looks like she doesn’t care what other people think or say, she’ll just do whatever she pleases.”

They’d be right.

Even when she was Mariko, she often did things the way she wanted, but never to the extent of Marika.

Marika would beat up anyone she hates.

Marika would beat up anyone she likes, but friendlier.

Everything is battle to Marika Fukuroi. That’s just what makes life fun. That’s just what makes life worth living.

Mariko remembered when she was still a kindergartner. That’s when she first became a Magical Girl.

The surge of power made her happy. Such power! Such strength! She didn’t have to listen to anyone else anymore!

So she didn’t listen to her test examiner.

She just did whatever she wanted, testing her powers on everything and anything. Other Magical Girls couldn’t do anything about her, since Marika was ridiculously strong, and her powers were versatile.

That all changed when her examiner stepped in.

Marika thought she was number one, so she defiantly disregarded her examiner. She proclaimed that the only way to make her follow her examiner was to beat her up in battle.

She didn't expect her examiner to give a proper beatdown to Marika. She was extremely strong, but Marika never gave up.

Her examiner was going easy on young Marika, but as Marika continued to become an actual threat, the examiner played seriously and instantly knocked her out.

When she came to, she thought she had lost the right to be a Magical Girl, but her examiner approached her, smiling, saying that she's proud of Marika.

She said that Marika had an unbreakable will, and that she wanted to introduce Marika to her own mentor.

It turns out, that examiner was a graduate of Mao's School, led by the most powerful Magical Girl of this generation.

And Marika was taken in, to be trained to focus her mind in battle.

That was the origin of Marika Fukuroi.

Mariko Fukuroi adjusted her glasses.

She's spent hours on the labs, working on researching flowers.

She'd already visited Styler Mimi's grave many times. Every time she did so, she still didn't feel comfortable at all.

Mimi's gone.

Styler Mimi isn't coming back.

Now there was no one she could just ask to come along with her. There was no one she could just talk to.

Styler Mimi was that person for Mariko, but now...

She realized how alone she really was.

To occupy her, she began devoting more time to her research. She's always researching plants, flowers, and other vegetation in the labs.

She had access to a laboratory maintained as a cover by the Land of Magic, so long as she doesn't blow herself up.

That lab also has some magical equipment that she can use to test the flowers.

Marika's powers involved growing plants on her head, so Mariko always had to know how the plant actually works in real life before she can harvest their seeds.

Normal growth rate, water intake, seasonal plants.

Weight and rarity were measured too, as well as the characteristics of each plant, in order to guess what kind of magical effect they might have.

Then, she'd try and speed up the growth artificially, and even with magic.

Mariko would then use this information as Marika Fukuroi, training with her own plant-based powers, harvested by her seeds.

Mariko would research until late at night, when the labs were forced to close. Then, she'd take her white labcoat and go back home with her car.

On the way home, she received a text message.

It was an automated text from the school she worked in.

An opening ceremony for the school year. All teachers must attend.

As Mariko grew up, she realized that she technically didn't have a job. Not that she needed a job, considering she's a Magical Girl who lives on battle.

Still, her parents would shun her because she seemed to not be productive at all.

So, out of the need to at least mean something to her family, she found herself a job as a teacher in a local high school.

At almost 30 years old, it's not that bad for her to get a job like that.

But it didn't change the fact that Mariko was still the black sheep of her family. Always obsessed with what seemed to be her hobby of plants and

not making anything productive out of it.

It's not like she could tell her family that she's a Magical Girl either.

Mariko always had to sit in family gatherings, eating silently while the rest of them talked about how their days went.

Then the questions came.

Usually asked to her mother.

"So how's Mariko?"

"Does she have a boyfriend?"

"How is her job?"

"What does she do?"

"Does she provide for herself?"

"Who are her friends?"

All of those, her mother would usually deflect away. Mariko did live alone, for the most part, but it's clear that her family was disappointed in her.

Her mother would talk about her childhood, when she and Mariko went fishing together, for example, or achievements that Mariko made a long time ago.

If she even explained about her plant hobby, her parents would be worried that Mariko was taking it like an obsession.

It's not her fault that this is how her life is like.

If her parents and family members won't accept it, then fine, have it that way.

Still, Mariko didn't want to embarrass her family, so she really did look for an actual day job.

She can hear her mother crying at night, and Mariko would feel bad that she must've disappointed her.

At the very least, she wants to make them proud.

A teacher was a good, respectable position. Mariko knew a bit about the subject she taught as well, and it was High School, too.

The next day, Mariko attended the school meeting.

“...So without further ado, let’s welcome Miss Fukuroi to the staff, she’ll be filling in for Miss Tadakoro while she’s on maternity leave,” said the Principal.

The staff clapped and clapped.

Mariko was almost bored to sleep from this entire opening ceremony. It’s the start of the school year, too, so that didn’t help.

When she finished, she rushed through several students and teachers who were curious about her behavior.

“Who was she?”

“How old is she?”

“Why isn’t she in proper uniform?”

“Did she fall asleep during the opening ceremony?”

“Does she shower?”

Mariko just dodged those questions by keeping her head down and not making any eye contact with them.

There were no lessons today, it was mostly orientation and a relaxing day at school.

Mariko wanted to see the students. She was curious on what they were doing. She wanted to see their faces, wanted to know what they were thinking.

She wanted to check out the science lab, she wanted to see the sports team, she wanted to see her fellow teachers.

She also wanted a breath of fresh air.

She went to the janitor's office, then she took out a master key. Don't mind if she borrows this for a while.

She unlocked the rooftop access. No one usually comes here, so it's pretty quiet. From here, she can see the entire schoolyard.

The baseball club was practicing their defense.

The soccer club was running around the track field.

The lacrosse club were playing an exhibition match.

Mariko remembered her old days as a student. She was carefree and free-spirited too, just like these kids.

Then it started raining.

On the rooftop, that would mean she'd be soaking wet. She had to go back inside. She cursed under her breath.

She couldn't be caught outside. Teachers weren't allowed to leave school grounds, and they certainly weren't allowed to go to the roof for no reason.

While walking back downstairs, she looked out the window. Students were all rushing into the building.

Mariko continued on, listening to the students' gossip in the hallways.

"You settle things with him?"

"Man, fuck that guy."

There were kids that were having trouble with some other kids. There were always those kinds of people in your life. The issue is how to deal with them.

Mariko would just beat them up if she didn't like them. Not in public though. Unless she was Marika.

Mariko and Marika are not two different people. They're the same person sharing two bodies.

The difference is that as a Magical Girl, some personality traits were... affected.

As Marika, she was a lot more instinctive, lustful for battle, and a lot more brash. This had some basis in Mariko's personality, but it was easier for her to keep it down as Mariko.

In a way, it's like being drunk. You lose your sense of inhibition, but unlike being drunk, Marika was completely aware of what she's doing, and she won't do anything to stop it.

Mariko continued walking down the hallways.

She liked watching people interact. Mostly because she wanted interaction herself, but didn't really know how to best approach people.

She heard some girls talking and gossiping.

Sometimes she'd be standing behind them so much that they'd notice. Then she'd just bow her head down and apologize, before realizing that just attracted more attention to herself.

Fuck. I'm an idiot .

She continued moving down the hallways.

She saw a girl. She didn't know why, but she seemed to be drawn to this girl. Ordinary girl, short hair.

It's the face.

She's seen her somewhere before.

Then she remembered.

The research facility. Underground. She broke her transformation once.

"See you guys later," said the girl as she walked away from her classmates.

Oh no, don't run away!

Mariko instantly grabbed the girl's arm.

The girl was a bit surprised, and looked at Mariko with a dumbfounded stare on her face.

Mariko looked back at the girl.

The girl looked at Mariko.

Wait, what was the plan?

Mariko didn't think she'd get this far.

Her old mentor, Mao Pam, always told her, "Never detransform in front of other Magical Girls, lest you want them to know what you *really* look like. That's dangerous and risky."

But this girl did it. This girl was brave enough to do it.

During their time in the underground facility, looking for the Man-Made Magical Girls, this girl was willing to detransform herself.

This girl who's name is...

...She had no idea of her human name.

Didn't that fire girl mention it? What was it again? Mariko didn't pay attention to human names, she didn't think that she'd meet people in human form.

"Um, Koyuki... Do you know her?" asked one of the girl's friends.

AH! Koyuki! Good, nice save!

"Ah, yes! We do know each other! During the opening ceremony I had a chat with a lot of the students, so that's where we met, ahahaha," said Mariko awkwardly.

Snow White.

The Magical Girl Hunter, Snow White.

During her time underground, Mariko and Snow White were fighting for their lives.

In order to buy her time, and to enjoy the thrill of battle, Mariko took the aggressive route, and fended off many Shufflin.

She didn't expect to survive.

Many of the Magical Girls lost their lives in that facility. How do you walk back from there?

Even though she did survive, she only expected a few to come back.

Now that she reconnected with someone who's experienced it...

...What should she even say?

She saw Snow White-Er, Koyuki's face, just staring back at her.

Her face was so gentle. So unlike the Magical Girl she saw back at the facility. As Koyuki, she seemed like your average girl, who had no clue of what she was doing.

For a second, Mariko doubted if this was really Snow White, but she knew that this was definitely her.

That's when Mariko realized that she's been holding onto Koyuki's arm for about 15 seconds.

She released it,

"Er... well, um, sorry about that!"

She struggled with her words, unsure of what to say, but Koyuki was faster, and bowed her head down.

"Apologies! It's nice seeing you again," said Koyuki before she turned around and left.

"Wait, Koyuki!"

"Do you know her?"

Her two friends spoke out as they chased after her.

Mariko was alone in the hallway, the other students looking at her. Some were suspicious, some were snickering, some were just curious.

Mariko felt pressured. She grabbed hold of her white coat and moved along.

☆ **Koyuki Himekawa**

After school, Koyuki went to a food store, where she'd eat hamburgers and other fast food with her friends, Sari and Yoshiki.

These two were friends she met when she entered high school, and weren't acquainted with her before in middle school.

"So, Koyuki, tell us about that teacher!"

"She's the new science teacher right?"

"Yeah, Miss Tadakoro's away. What's her name?"

"Yeah, Koyuki, what's her name?"

Koyuki calmly ate a hamburger.

"Honestly, I have no idea," she said.

"WHAAA?"

"Then why'd she call out for you?"

"Yeah, she grabbed your hand and everything, you two must've known each other, right?"

"You must've met them once!"

"Maybe you forgot her face, like Yo-Chan does."

"What? I do *not* forget people's face. You're the one who does that!"

"Nuh-uh, I remember everyone crystal clear."

"Who was your second-to-last boyfriend?"

"Uh... I don't remember my *exes* ! Who does that?"

"Ha! See, you're more forgetful than I am!"

"Nope! I remember when I first met him! I was at the beach with sunglasses and a sexy bikini!"

"Okay, stop! I don't wanna know about your sexual fantasies."

"You know who I wanna know more about? Koyuki!"

"Oh, yeah! Koyuki! C'mon, tell us about yourself. Tell us your secrets and we'll tell you ours!"

"What's Koyuki like in the dark?"

"Got any *juicy stuff* , hmm?"

Koyuki chuckled as she looked at the both of them. Slightly blushing a bit, she answered, “Honestly, it’s not really that big of a deal. Not much to talk about, really,” she said with a blush.

“People who say that have the biggest secrets!”

“Yeah, c’mon, Koyuki, tell us!”

“YOOOOO, watcha both talkin’ about?” came a voice from somewhere behind them.

Taking a seat in an empty chair was a familiar face to Koyuki. Her name was Sumire. She’s been classmates with Koyuki ever since middle school.

“Heya, Sumi-Chan! We’re trying to figure out Koyuki’s deepest secrets!”

“Yeah, we barely know any fun stuff about her!” said the both of them.

Sumire smiled slyly at Koyuki. Koyuki raised her eyebrow.

“I can tell you a *lot* about Koyuki. She’s all shy and quiet now, but it’s no joke that she always just prefers to stay quiet. She’s actually a *huge* Magical Girl fan,” said Sumire.

Koyuki laughed, “Well, yep! You got me there! Magical Girls are kind of my thing,” said Koyuki.

“You played that social game *forever* ! If it didn’t shut down I thought you’d probably just keep on playing,” said Sumire.

“Good thing it stopped then,” said Koyuki shrugging.

“Hey, Sumi-Chan, does Koyuki know the new Science Teacher?”

“Yeah, they talked a bit, but Koyuki didn’t wanna say!” said the two friends.

Sumire glanced at Koyuki, “Hmm, can’t say she’s met her before. She’s new after all, but it makes sense why she’d know Koyuki. Koyuki has that *impactful* look on someone.”

“Really? Who is she, anyways?”

“Yeah, Sumi-Chan. You know her?”

“Of course I know her! I actually go to the Opening Ceremony! They announced her name there. Were you three late?” asked Sumire.

The three girls laughed nervously.

Sumire sighed.

“Yeah, well, she’s the new science teacher. She’s gonna replace Miss Tadakoro for a while now. Maternity leave. Her name’s Mariko Fukuroi, or Miss Fukuroi for short.”

Koyuki spit out her soda. The sound of choking and coughing was heard as she felt the liquid burning in her nose.

Koyuki coughed as she dropped her food and spilled her drink all over the table.

“Whoa, Koyuki, you okay?”

“Yeah, you look like you choked big time.”

Koyuki took a minute to regain her composure.

“I’m fine... I’m fine... whew...”

Mariko Fukuroi?

Koyuki knew a Magical Girl with the name Marika Fukuroi. It’s only just a letter difference but could it be the same girl?

The same battle-hungry Magical Girl?

As a teacher?

That explains why she grabbed her hand, but really... could it really be her? Koyuki was unsure, but at the same time...

☆ **Mariko Fukuroi**

Mariko wanted to thank Snow White.

Mariko wanted to talk to Snow White.

Mariko wanted to know how Snow White handled herself. She wanted to know the rest of the story. She just wanted to talk to someone.

Why did she waste her chance back at that school.

She didn't know her personally. Was she teaching a class with her in it? Was that really her to begin with?

She had to find her.

She asked the Examination Division for Snow White, but she was met with a reply, "Sorry, we don't disclose our personell's private information to outsiders."

Shit.

Mariko's bad reputation as Marika must've played a part in that. She still wanted to find Snow White, though.

She asked, she visited, and she even went straight as Marika to the Examination Division branches in Japan.

When she didn't get an answer, she went berserk.

She crashed a table, broke windows, and it took other Magical Girls to restrain her and send her back home.

Transforming back into Mariko, she took a long hard look at her experiences.

Without Mimi, there really was no one else she could just talk with.

How does Snow White do it?'

How does she balance her Magical Girl life with her school life? From when they last met, it was clear that Snow White was very stressed out in her Magical Girl life.

She showed little to know emotion, yet...

...As Koyuki, she was laughing with her friends, talking with them, hanging out with them.

One of them is the real personality, the other was an attempt to function normally in society.

Why can't Mariko do that? She also had a rough time in society. She was pretty awkward herself, but at the very least she could *try* and hang

around people.

Be more like Snow White.

Mariko's a science teacher, so she can be a good role model to her students, right?

The next day, Mariko decided. She's going to be a good teacher, teach the kids, try and become less hotheaded in the process.

She already made introductory quizzes all night.

She ate some pizza for breakfast, washed her hands, and while she got ready, was trying hard to pack all the tests into her bag.

Her hand slipped, and was still moist. The test fell into the pizza box, some of them got dirty with food.

Mariko cursed, but kept the tests that were safe. She continued packing them, when she heard beeping noises from her phone.

It wasn't her normal phone. That was her Magical Phone.

She turned it on.

The first thing she noticed was that her last text, besides the text that she got to investigate S-City, was sent towards Mimi.

Almost all her texts are with Mimi.

There have been no other texts since.

Mariko's heart sank just a little bit, before she checked on the new messages section of her inbox.

The sender was unknown, the topic.

Snow White .

Mariko immediately opened the mail.

Meet me in school rooftop, after school.

Mariko's heart soared. Snow White? Is that really you!? Mariko immediately packed her bags, and resolved to meet her once again.

So many things she wants to talk about.

☆ **Fal**

“I don’t like it, Pon.”

“You don’t like what?”

“This! I don’t like THIS! I’ve got a really bad feeling, Pon. Really bad!”

“Why so nervous, Fal. We’ve met her before.”

“Yeah, when we teamed up. Who knows what she’s like now. We don’t even know her for more than a day, Pon!”

“Relax, Fal.”

“Did you know she attacked an Examination Division branch?”

“Yeah, broken windows and everything. I heard.”

“Exactly! She’s out looking for *you* , Snow White! Her violent behavior worries me, Pon! It should worry you too!”

“And why’s that?”

“She knows who you are, Pon! She knows where you live, your family, friends! Why did she become a teacher? A *transfer* teacher, suddenly, Pon! You know what I think...”

“What?”

“...I think this is like one of those villains who discovered the hero’s identity, Pon!”

“Okay, you’re overreacting.”

“I’m *not* , Pon! I’ve run simulations”

“Oh, you’ve run simulations, have you?”

“Yes, did you forget, I was once Keek’s mascot. She gave me a fraction of her powers. I have my own pocket dimension cyber world. I downloaded your most current data, and Marika Fukuroi’s most current data, generated them in the cyber world, in *these* conditions, and in the event of a fight, you lose every time, Pon!”

“We’re not gonna fight, Fal.”

“You’re not in your element, Pon! If this turns into a fight you’re going to lose! This is Marika we’re talking about, Pon!”

“I’ve beaten Mao’s School people before.”

“You’ve beaten Flame Flamey! She may be in Mao’s School, but she’s not exactly a good representation of one. She’s not on the level of Marika at all, Pon!”

“Doesn’t matter cause we won’t fight.”

“I just... I don’t like this, Pon, I’m worried... You should hold *Ruler* straight. You don’t want to be caught off-guard.”

“Fal.”

“Also, I’ve prepared to transport your family and friends into cyberspace if things get hefty, they’ll be safe.”

“Fal.”

“And I’ll also definitely be lending my support, however I can, Pon!”

“Fal.”

“What?”

“She’s here.”

“WHAT? WHERE? ABOVE? Did she sneak past us? Oooh, that’s sneaky, I can’t detect her at all, Pon!”

“That’s because she’s not in her Magical Girl form,” said Snow White with a smile.

A large creak on the door behind them began to open.

A woman with a white coat and sunglasses came in, carrying a box. Her posture was that of someone a bit timid.

“H...Hello,” said the woman.

This was the same teacher that grabbed Snow White yesterday. This was Mariko Fukuroi, Marika’s human form.

She offered the box to Snow White.

“It’s cake,” said Mariko.

“Cake? Oh, this box, Pon! I see. Eh, cake? Why cake?” asked Fal.

“I thought... you might like cake,” said Marika nervously.

Snow White opened the box, saw the cake, and smiled at Mariko.

“Thanks. C’mon. Let’s get a seat,” said Snow White.

She sat down, placed *Ruler* away, and began eating bits of the cake.

“W-Wanna eat cake together?” asked Mariko.

Snow White nodded.

Mariko and Snow White sat down. To anyone else, this looked like a teacher and a student spending time on the rooftop, not like two Magical Girls who survived a huge ordeal.

The both of them stared into the sunset while eating.

“...Thanks,” said Mariko.

“For what?” asked Snow White.

“For everything. I don’t... I don’t really know, I’m just, not good at this talking thing, so... thanks.”

Snow White smiled.

“You wanna just hang out as Magical Girls maybe?” offered Snow White.

Mariko’s eyes brightened up.

Snow White chuckled.

Mariko immediately ran off from the rooftop shutting the door behind her. Only a few minutes later...

Slam!

The rooftop door burst open, kicked with the force of a Magical Girl. Standing on the door was a purple-dressed Magical Girl, with flowers all

over her.

Marika Fukuroi.

“Alright, Magical Girl Hunter! We’ve got the whoooole night to ourselves, so let’s get goin’ already! HAHAAHAHA!”

Marika put both her hands on her hip and grinned, as Snow White smiled and nodded.

“What’s that on your head?” asked Snow White.

“A flower, duh!”

“What *kind* of flower? It’s pretty,” said Snow White.

“Gah... Well, if you *have* to know, it’s a Birds-Eye Primrose! Pretty cool, huh? Not sure what it does yet, but I’ve been growing it in my spare time!”

“You grow plants?”

“Plant Magical Girl, hello! Anyways, c’mon, we’re wasting daylight! Want me to drag you myself?”

“No thanks, I’m good. C’mon, I’ll show you around,” said Snow White.

The two of them jumped across rooftops, as the Birds-Eye Primrose on Marika Fukuroi’s head began to glow brightly.

Three Sisters Raising Project: Restart

**This story takes place months before Magical
Girl Raising Project: Restart**

The wasteland stretched beyond the horizon. There were no weeds that grew on the ground, and dust clouds rolled in the distance.

Looking to the right, still nothing but endless wastes.

Looking to the left, the same sight again.

If you looked up in the sky, you would see the sun shining brightly, and feel its heat radiating from above.

Within this wasteland, 3 sisters gathered around.

Sorami's mouth was half-open she squinted her eyes and stared far away at the distance.

Premium Sachiko was crouching while holding her hands to her head.

Uluru probably wanted to believe that this was some kind of shared dream or hallucination, judging by her reddening face, but this was very real.

Sorami knew that Uluru probably wanted to cower like Sachiko, but as the eldest, she had to take charge.

And that's why Uluru started shouting commands.

"FORM UP!"

Uluru puffed her chest. Sachiko jumped up. Sorami yawned and moved right next to Sachiko.

"Sis, is this really necessary?" asked Sorami.

"Protocols are protocols, Sorami, now FORM UP!" said Uluru.

Sachiko and Sorami lined up side by side, with Uluru standing in front of them. She paced back and forth.

"CALLSIGNS!"

"...One"

"Twooo~"

Uluru breathed in heavily.

“Alright, let’s remember the mission. We’re supposed to report back to Lady Puck after all this,” said Uluru, walking forward.

“Noo problem, sis,” said Sorami.

Sponsorships are important in both the human world and the Land of Magic. Without the backing of powerful people, there may not be a way for you to launch any big projects.

After all, if every huge project was funded, there would be more failures than there would be successes.

Puk Puck was one of the Three Sages, and therefore, people tend to seek her out as a potential investment partner.

Being backed by a Sage was both a great honor and ensures your project will at least take off.

One day, Puk Puck received an e-mail from a potential applicant. Usually it’s very hard to get a Sage’s approval, but this applicant had a very straightforward attitude and their offer interested Puk Puck.

A Simulation Game that’s so real that it can serve as a Virtual Reality Training Sim. The applicant boasted that they could make any situation possible, helping to train future Magical Girls in safety with using their magic.

It seemed like a very useful device to have, and so, after considering it, Puk Puck decided to back the project.

It was apparently a Magical Girl from the newly formed IT Division who sent the request.

She wished to inspect the project herself, as Puk Puck almost always does everything in person. However, whenever Puk Puck goes out, her daughters, especially Uluru, insist on being by her side.

Like an entourage and her personal guard, Puk Puck welcomed her daughters with open hands.

Puk Puck changed clothes to an elegant meeting dress. She dressed in a Rococo-style dress, like she came out of Fragonard's paintings.

Together, they went to the address of the applicant.

When they arrived there, they found out it was some dirty messy office, with computers placed everywhere, and objects scattered around.

There are people who live like this?

This doesn't seem to be a proper place to welcome someone like Puk Puck, but if Puk Puck's okay with it, then her daughters will be okay with it.

There was a girl in a chair, she turned around, and upon sight of Puk Puck and her daughters, she smiled happily.

"Ah, welcome! Welcome to my world!"

Glasses, lab coat, light swimwear, purple hair, Rubik's Cube on her neck.

She seemed eager though, which was a good sign. Though she could greet Puk Puck personally. It would only be proper.

Puk Puck stepped forward and smiled.

"Hiya, Keek! Nice to meet you!"

"And it's an honor, Great Puk Puck!" said Keek as she rolled down her sleeves to shake hands with Puk Puck.

The Magical Girl *Keek* was the applicant that offered the plan to Puk Puck.

Puk Puck laughed as she shook Keek's hand, and Keek also laughed as well. She urged Puk Puck to sit on a nearby sofa. Puk Puck took the center, but when she sat on it, the ends of the sofa had their springs break out.

Old, busted sofa.

Sachiko slowly crouched down. It looked like she wanted to sit on the floor. Uluru lightly elbowed Sachiko while clearing her throat, Sachiko

stood up straight again.

Keek adjusted her glasses. “Well then! Let’s begin, about my plan-”

SLAM!

The door was kicked open. On the other side of the door was another Magical Girl.

Black and white striped shirt, blonde hair, leather bowtie and spiked decorations, and a strange out-of-this-world guitar.

She even had a mischievous smile on her.

Uluru instinctively aimed her popgun at her, but Puk Puck quickly jumped out and restrained her.

“It’s fine, Uluru! I think she’s a good girl!” said Puk Puck.

“That’s right! You don’t hafta worry about me! I’m everyone’s favorite idol, Tot Pop!” shouted the girl, posing for effect.

Behind Puk Puck’s group, Keek was rolling her eyes and breathing in a heavy sigh.

“I didn’t call you”

“Don’t care!”

“LEAVE!”

“Nah!”

“Tot, I swear...”

“Hey, you’re the one who said you’d play with me today, right? I came! You can’t just tell me to go back home!”

“I’m a little *busy* today, Tot. If you don’t realize it, I’m having a meeting with someone *very, very important*!”

“Doesn’t matter! You invited me, so I get first dibs!”

“There’s a limit to how much I can deal with you, Tot, now *go home!*”

Puk Puck came in between the two.

“Ahaha, alright, alright... Let’s all just relax a bit! You’re Tot, right? Sorry to interrupt your meeting! Our schedules must’ve clashed. Totally my bad! Let’s all just talk together, alright?” said Puk Puck.

Tot nodded and glanced at Keek. “See? She’s cool with it! So chillax!”

Tot Pop took a seat in the sofa, stretching her legs to cover the whole couch, and she relaxed by leaning backwards. The fact that she didn’t apologize to Puk Puck and took her *entire sofa* made Uluru a bit irritated.

Sachiko gave Sorami a ‘What should we do?’ face. Sorami calmed her down.

“Tot’s a pretty cool name for a Rockstar,” said Puk Puck.

“Aw, shucks! Thanks! See, Keek? She gets me. I like her!” said Tot Pop.

“This *nuisance* always causes trouble, and it’s better if we have our meeting without her,” complained Keek.

“Aw, don’t worry! It’s perfectly fine!” said Puk Puck, not even losing her cool, acting calm around everyone.

In fact, she continued on, “Actually, you three. Mind if I get the room to myself and these two?”

The Three Sisters glanced at each other, slightly taken aback by that suggestion. They weren’t really keen on leaving Puk Puck alone.

“Keek, isn’t there a waiting room or something?” asked Puk Puck.

Keek sighed, she nodded, and she snapped her fingers.

A mosaic pattern gathered around the walls, and a door appeared on the walls.

The Three Sisters opened the door, and walked through it. Uluru looked back at Puk Puck.

“You sure about this, Lady Puck?” she asked.

“I’ll be fine! It’s better if I talk in private, anyways!” said Puk Puck.

When they passed through the door, the door slammed shut, and they couldn't hear a single thing from the other room.

"You sure this is okay...?" asked Sachiko nervously.

"It'll be fine, Sachiko! Lady Puck said so, so we shouldn't worry too much!" said Sorami, patting her sister in the back.

"Don't just assume things you don't even know! We really don't know if she's gonna be okay with those two!" shouted Uluru.

Uluru flailed her arms around while shouting at her sisters, and her arm hit a nearby shelf. It shook, and books fell from it, creating dust that Uluru breathed in and coughed out.

"You should be more careful, sis," said Sorami calmly.

"Gah... This place is ridiculous. I thought the *last* room was messy, but *this* ? How do you even top *this* ?" said Uluru.

The room seemed to be some kind of storeroom. Lots of junk and other things piled up on the floor. It's a bit cramped too, thanks to the messiness of the room.

"It's a little dusty, yeah," said Sorami.

"Can't stand being in this room for a few minutes, let alone the amount of time Lady Puck's gonna spend talking to them," said Uluru, irritated.

"We should spend the time doing something to distract us, then! Like cleanup duty!" suggested Sorami.

"Actually, that's not a bad idea. Let's all do cleanup duty. This room's filled with so much trash I'm sure that by the time we finish up, they'll be done discussing. C'mon, Sachiko, you help too!" said Uluru.

"C-Can I get a seat after?" asked Sachiko.

Uluru sighed, "I don't know *how* you always get tired. You're almost as bad as Sorami."

The sisters didn't really know if the room was wide or narrow. The multitude of items and boxes blocked visibility.

They couldn't even see where the walls were.

So they started to separate the boxes and begin stacking them up. There were apparently tables too, hidden amongst all the machinery, garbage, and other things that shouldn't even belong here.

Sorami's face was that of joy, but Sachiko's face was nervous, trying to find the best items to pick up and put down.

Uluru, meanwhile, tried to work as fast as possible. She was a diligent girl, but the sight of this trash is making her angry, so she began working a bit sloppily, doing her best to speed up the process.

It didn't help that every time she moved something, dust seemed to blow into her face, causing her to cough once again.

At one point, she coughed and took a step back, and the butt of her popgun tangled with a table, causing it to tilt, and causing some heavy machinery to fall down to the floor.

When that happened, she saw a bright light that flooded the entire room.

Now the three of them were in this wasteland.

"So... *Everybody* saw that light, right?" asked Uluru.

"Mhmm" replied Sorami.

"So we all agree on our story?" asked Uluru.

"Yep!" said Sorami, nodding.

"Good. Good."

"So are we gonna tell them that you pushed a switch that brought us all here? Because that's what happened," asked Sorami while smiling.

"STOP SAYING IT'S MY FAULT!" shouted Uluru, face reddening.

"But sis, it really is your fault! I saw it using my powers," said Sorami, a finger on her chin.

“W-Well, you can’t just say things like that to Lady Puck, not so casually too!” muttered Uluru.

Sachiko looked around. “Um... Does anyone know where we are?”

Uluru and Sorami noticed their surroundings as well.

“Are we even in Japan?” asked Sorami.

“Doesn’t matter. What matters is we’re going home. If we meet any bandits or thieves, I’ll handle them,” said Uluru, reaching for her popgun on her back.

But there was no popgun on Uluru’s back.

Uluru grasped nothing but air. She patted herself on the back, checking everything. She took off her coat and swepted it across the ground, searching for it. Her face reddened again.

“Where’s my gun? I don’t have my rifle with me!” said Uluru panicking.

“That’s fine, sis! It’s just a toy gun, so it shouldn’t really matter!” said Sorami cheerfully.

“It’s *not* a toy! It’s an *actual* weapon! It’s also *important* !” said Uluru.

“I’m not saying it’s not a weapon, just that it doesn’t really fire any bullets,” said Sorami.

Uluru grumbled angrily. But she noticed that Sachiko was trembling even more than usual.

She pointed at a distance. Uluru tried to see what it was she’s trying to point at. A bit far from them, looking a little drunk, was the silhouette of a human...

...Wait, something’s off.

It had no skin.

It wasn’t a human, it was a skeleton.

“KYAAAAAAAAA-Mmpfh!?”

Sachiko screamed, but Sorami immediately grabbed her sister and closed her mouth.

Too late, the skeleton faced towards them and walked slowly. Further skeletons seemed to pop out of the ground and began walking towards them as well.

Was this magic?

“It’s okay! I’ll just use my own magic!” said Uluru.

She clapped her hands and rubbed them together, breathing in slowly. Then she clasped her hands on the side of her mouth, and shouted, “IF YOU MOVE A SINGLE STEP, YOU’LL DIE!”

Uluru’s Magical Skill is ‘*The ability to tell believable lies*’. Whatever Uluru says, whether it’s a lie or the truth, will be believed by anyone who hears and understands her.

It doesn’t change reality, but the target *will* believe them.

However, the skeletons kept walking towards her.

Uluru gulped.

“I mean... They’re technically *already* dead,” said Sorami.

“...You’re *really* not helping here, Sorami,” said Uluru.

“Maybe they don’t understand you. They don’t have ears,” said Sorami again.

“Okay, y’know what, let’s all just shut up and fight them, okay?” said Uluru.

The three Magical Girls charged towards the skeletons. Uluru punched them, Sorami kicked them, and Sachiko screamed while punching and kicking them.

The sisters fought in a circle, back to back, protecting each other, and after the coast is clear, they sat down.

BEEP BEEP BEEP!

A ringing noise was heard, and Sorami checked on her pocket. Her Magical Phone was ringing, and so was everyone else's.

Sorami turned it on.

You have defeated the Skeleton Group. The Tutorial is now complete

You have gained 8 Magical Candies

"What's this? Looks like something out of a game," said Uluru outside.

"What's a Magical Candy?" asked Sachiko nervously.

"Sorry girls, I really don't know what's going on either," said Sorami.

The three sisters discussed what happened.

The bright light, the fact that they were transported somewhere, the skeletons that attacked them so suddenly, the Magical Candy thing that just happened.

Sorami's eyes widened. "Wait, I think we have something," she said as she navigated through her Magical Phone.

"There. The title of the game."

Magical Girl Raising Project .

"Wait, isn't that the title of the project she was working on?" asked Uluru.

"Seems so, sis... Little weird, but fun!" said Sorami.

"Why the hell would she need to fund a project she's already completed?" asked Uluru.

"Maybe this is a Beta version?" asked Sorami.

"Looks like we can change modes," said Sachiko, browsing the menus.

"Huh? What do you mean?" asked Uluru.

"What's this R-18 mode?" asked Sachiko, as her finger slowly went to press it.

"AAAAAAH!" Uluru shouted as she grabbed Sachiko's finger and pulled it away.

“DON’T TOUCH THINGS YOU DON’T KNOW ABOUT!” said Uluru.

“Hmm... I never thought I’d be trapped in a game world! This is kinda fun!” said Sorami.

“H-How can you say that at a time like this!?” asked Uluru.

“Well, there’s a first time for everything, and it’s not all bad, right?” asked Sorami.

“Um, guys... Look at this...” said Sachiko, nervously pointing at the screen of her Magical Phone.

You may only leave the game if you clear all the areas

“W-What do we do?” asked Sachiko.

“We shouldn’t worry. Lady Puck will notice we’re missing, and we also have the game creator too! They’ll get us out,” said Uluru.

“Well... I don’t wanna be the bearer of bad news, but...” Sachiko offered her phone again.

Time passes faster in the game than in real life.

Uluru gulped.

“Sorami, can you find out more instructions?” asked Uluru.

“I can try, sis,” said Sorami, checking on her Magical Phone. After a while, she summarized all the information she got.

Magical Candies are the currency of the game. They’re collected by defeating monsters in the game, and are used to buy tools in shops like weapons and armor.

Shops exist within Towns. Small pockets of civilization in each area of the game.

To complete the game, they have to defeat a final boss called The Great Dragon. Then, they win the game.

Also, in this world, Magical Girls have to deal with human issues, such as tiredness, hunger, and sleep. Buy food in the shops, or they’ll starve to death.

With every word that Uluru read, her face became pale, and she wanted to cry out loud. But she was the eldest and she was the Captain of the Guard. She can't show that kind of weakness.

She puffed out her chest. "Alright! It's clear what we have to do! We have to find the nearest Town and buy some equipment there! C'mon! We can't waste any time!" said Uluru.

The three sisters walked their way to the nearest town they could find. It wasn't hard, since there was nothing around the Wasteland. All they had to do was find the towering bustling cityscape.

When they got close, they found themselves in a Medieval looking city, with several people walking around.

They didn't seem to notice them, nor did they seem to care.

"Oh, are these NPCs?" wondered Sorami out loud.

"What's an... En-Pee-Sea?" asked Sachiko.

"Non-Player Characters. Characters controlled by the game. C'mon, there should be a shop here, right?" said Uluru.

The humans didn't interact with the sisters unless they talked to them. They really did behave like actual NPCs. They answered questions vaguely or directly, but every question was met with the same set of answers.

"This is the something-something Town," so it seems the Town wasn't even named yet.

"The shop is in the city somewhere"

"You need to pay with Magical Candy."

Since these were NPCs that were supposed to be human, Uluru took this time to test out her powers.

"The sky's going to fall soon," said Uluru.

The bystanders that heard her were scared for their lives, and took shade in the buildings.

Okay, so Uluru's powers weren't disabled. That's a good thing. Perhaps the skeletons really were deaf, technically. That, or they just didn't care, or couldn't understand her.

"By the way, if this is a European city, why are you speaking Japanese?" asked Uluru.

The NPCs just shrugged it off.

Wow, if you're going to design a game at least make it consistent.

They reached the shop. They saw a variety of items being sold there. Including weapons and a ticket.

Uluru browsed it, and saw a weapon called ' *Rifle* '. It looked similar to Uluru's original popgun, though this time it looked like it came from the Renaissance Era.

"My gun! I can buy my gun! But we don't have enough candies..."

Uluru cleared her throat.

"Excuse me sir, we paid for this gun earlier, but forgot to pick it up. Could you give it to us?" asked Uluru.

The shopkeeper scratched his head.

"If you paid for it, you should've gotten it. You deposit candies here, and the item's transferred to your Magical Phones," he said.

Uluru's magic is useless. It's not the usual kind of shop, where you could get something cheap by lying.

They had to actually put in the work of collecting Magical Candies.

"It's the spirit of the game, sis! It makes a lot of sense," said Sorami.

Sorami, being a gamer herself, has determined the game's objectives. Like a typical RPG, you're supposed to defeat enemies, get Magical Candy, use it to buy better gear, and defeat bigger enemies.

Eventually, you'll have sufficient equipment and gear to defeat the final boss.

There was also Preserved Food that was sold in the shops, for hunger needs.

However, it seems the weapons are unique for each Magical Girl. Sorami and Sachiko both had unique weapons as well.

“Myyy weapon iiiis.... Nunchucks! Game controller nunchucks! Connected with a string! Awww, so cool!” said Sorami happily.

“Mine’s... just a knife. I used a knife in one of the training sessions with Lady Puck, so I guess that’s my weapon,” said Sachiko, slightly disappointed.

It’s settled. The sisters will grind for Candies by defeating the skeletons, which seemed easy enough to defeat, and then purchase weapons and progress through the game.

The sisters searched for skeleton groups. Each time, they approached them as a group.

Uluru always leads the charge, handling a majority of the skeletons.

Sorami also did her best in fighting. Due to the weak bodies of the skeleton hordes, she doesn’t really have to try that hard.

Sachiko was actually having fun, and going all-out in fighting, punching them, roundhouse kicking them, and throwing them to each other.

“S-Sachiko!? You got really excited all of a sudden,” said Uluru.

“Yeah, sis! You’re not usually this energetic, it feels good to fight along your sisters huh?” asked Sorami.

“These things aren’t alive, and I haven’t really gotten a chance to practice the moves I’ve learned, so for the first time, I can actually be free!” said Sachiko, hitting and punching the skeletons.

“Sheee’s actually kind of scary like this,” said Sorami nervously.

They’ve gotten enough Magical Candy. They used it to buy some Preserved Food, head back into the Wasteland, and defeat more skeletons, coming back to the store when they have enough Candies.

Finally, they had enough candy to purchase their own weapons. Uluru didn't waste any time. She purchased her new rifle.

It was a strange design. It *looked* like a rifle, and it had the word *RIFLE* painted onto the barrel, but...

"Oooh, that's not a single-shot rifle, that's full-auto! That's not exactly following Japanese laws, sis!" said Sorami.

"Don't worry, we're in a game! You're *supposed* to fire these kinds of guns in games! It's safe!"

Uluru had always longed for a gun that can fire actual bullets. Being the Captain of the Guard with a non-functioning gun was never a good thing.

She thought that in this game world, she could finally have the luxury to fire a gun, feel the muzzle burn, and see the black smoke rising out as she defeated an enemy with it. It made her feel powerful.

The girls moved on to the next area, purchasing a ticket to move forward. There, they encountered their latest enemy, *Red Skeletons*.

"Eh? What're these? Rare enemies?" asked Uluru.

"R-Rare?" wondered Sachiko out loud.

"Usually rare enemies drop more loot and items, sooo we should try defeating them!" said Sorami happily.

"Don't worry, I've got this!"

Uluru stepped in front of her sisters, aimed at the horde of Red Skeletons, and pulled the trigger.

The sound of bullets ripping through the air was deafening. Repeating chains of loud explosions being fired from the muzzle of Uluru's rifle.

Unfortunately, it seems like none of the bullets are actually hitting their mark. The recoil was far too powerful, and Uluru was firing in all directions.

The Red Skeletons moved faster. Uluru realized that she can't hit anything with this kind of tactic, so she decided it's better off to just beat

down the Red Skeletons.

As usual, the three sisters fought off the horde rather easily, with Uluru using her rifle as a melee weapon... yet again.

“Did you miss all your shots on purpose, sis?” asked Sorami.

“N-NO! I was aiming for the skeletons!” said Uluru.

“Oh, so the recoil is just too big then,” said Sorami.

“N-No it’s not! I just... had a split-second realization that ranged attacks are *bad* for them, yeah...” said Uluru embarrassed.

The girls proceeded forwards into the next area, and this one looked very mountainous and volcanic. The enemies here are different from their usual skeleton hordes.

The enemies here looked like pointy-eared demonic goblins from those legends. Some of them are even huge and muscular.

The demons even have armor and weapons of their own.

“Don’t worry, Team Uluru! These guys are just skeletons in different forms!” said Uluru.

“Really? T-Then, they should be easy!” said Sachiko.

Team Uluru tried to fight off the demons and ogres, but when they did, they realized their weapons did little to no damage, and the demons and ogres managed to beat them up so badly that they had to retreat.

Team Uluru ran away as soon as a gigantic version of an ogre showed up. Muscular, two horns, and sharp teeth.

Sorami understood the rules of the game, and she told the team to head towards the nearest Town.

Despite the monsters chasing them almost all the way, when they reached the Town, the monsters all stopped and went back to their natural habitat.

“ *Huff... Huff...* How’d you know?” asked Uluru.

“Cauuuse the Town’s a safe place! With shops! No RPG would attack you when you’re in a shop or resting,” said Sorami happily.

But Team Uluru had failed. Despite Uluru convincing her sisters that the enemies were just reskinned skeletons, that’s far from the truth. These monsters were somehow stronger than Magical Girls, and harder to defeat with their current weapons.

Uluru made the conclusion that the best way to defeat the demons and ogres are to purchase better gear.

The game really does want them to level up.

However, they didn’t have enough Candy, and they couldn’t collect any in this area. Which means...

“Aww, do we *have* to backtrack?” asked Sorami.

“We need Magical Candies. C’mon, form up!” said Uluru.

“I think I m-might be getting tired,” said Sachiko nervously.

Despite not wanting to, they backtracked back to the previous two areas. They collected Magical Candy by defeating the skeleton enemies. Whenever they encountered a Red Skeleton, Uluru would try her luck, only to find that the recoil of the rifle was still too great to fire properly.

Finally, they had enough candies to purchase new weapons.

Weapons +1 , which included the *Rifle +1* , *Nunchucks +1* , and *Knife +1* .

These should be better weapons to handle those demons and ogres, and it was! With these weapons, Team Uluru easily defeated the ogres and demons.

They went to a bar and ordered wine to celebrate, but they ran out of Candy, so they just had to celebrate quietly with 3 glasses of water instead.

1 Hour Later

The three sisters ran as fast as possible, their faces were that of fear, and behind them, a horde of 100 demons were chasing them relentlessly.

They ran across the mountain roads, finally avoiding the demonic horde. Thanks to the rules of the game, they were tired.

“ *Huff... Huff...* Our weapons didn’t work as well as we thought,” said Uluru.

“Maybe... *Huff... Huff...* We overestimated our weapons... Hehe...” said Sorami.

“I can’t do this.... I can’t do this... *Huff ...*” said Sachiko.

The blazing sunlight was making them heat up. They were tired as well from all the fighting that they did.

The skill gap was huge. There was no way to compensate that even with the weapons they have.

“Not acceptable... I’m not going to accept that the Puk Puck Honor Guard is weaker than some low-rate ogres!” said Uluru.

“Maybe... Maybe we don’t have to fight them?” said Sachiko.

Sorami’s eyes brightened up.

“Ah... There *are* games like that! So that’s how it’s going to be, hmm? That’s interesting!” said Sorami.

Uluru looked confused, but Sorami calmly explained to her older sister.

Certain games don’t have combat as the main mechanic. Some games rely on avoiding a more powerful enemy entirely. These are known as Stealth Games.

Sorami suggested that instead of going through the game as warriors, they should go in as scouts instead.

So the three began scouting for demon and ogre patrols, making sure to pass through when they were few and far between.

This ensured that they can defeat them without even fighting them.

However, even if they figured that out, getting out of the Mountain Area was a bit harder than the Wasteland of Grassland Areas.

They needed to purchase an app called *Translator-Kun*. Afterwards, they had to go find ancient scrolls and texts and use *Translator-Kun* to decipher it. After *that*, they had to solve the mysteries and puzzles that they got from the translated text. To add to that, they *still* have to sneak past enemies as well.

The process of doing this took a little over...

...Oh, probably 2 weeks in-game.

Finally, they advanced to the next area, the Cave Area. They escaped the demons and ogres, they don't have to deal with hordes of them chasing after the sisters all the time.

However, the enemy they faced was much harder in comparison.

Large, about 50 meters in length, and a 30-meter wingspan. It had hard scales that could penetrate bullets, and breathed fire that could melt the rocks of the cavern.

Shooting it with Uluru's upgraded rifle didn't work either.

"ARE YOU *KIDDING* ME RIGHT NOW?"

"W-We should RUUUN!"

The three sisters ran across the caverns, with the dragon following behind them. As soon as they got out of the Cave Area's exit, the dragon didn't pursue them further, due to not being in its designated area.

But they were suddenly targeted by laser-powered sniper rifles. A sudden change in scenery.

"GO BACK! GO BACK!!!"

No matter what lies out there, the dragon should technically be easier to deal with. They decided to run the other direction.

That's when they had to go through the dragon.

They all ran underneath the dragon as the dragon struggled to catch all of them. The sisters made a blitz through the caverns to try and escape certain death.

But someone was lagging behind.

Uluru looked to her side.

“Sachiko!”

Premium Sachiko was running slower than all of them, and the dragon was about to attack her with its claws.

“Sachiko, duck!”

Sachiko dived forward, and the dragon missed its swing. In response, it began to launch a fireball at Sachiko’s position. Sachiko got up and jumped away, but the blast propelled her forwards as she rolled across the cavern floor...

...Straight to some sharp rocks.

“Sis! Look out!” said Sorami, tackling Sachiko and changing her trajectory. Sorami couldn’t stop her, but Sachiko avoided the rocks...

...Only to fall off the rocky Cliffside.

“SA-SACHIKOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!”

She rushed towards the Cliffside, sliding down and picking up the unconscious Sachiko, placing her on Uluru’s back.

The sisters ran away, back towards the Mountain Area’s Town, believing that there’s a better way to handle the dragon.

When they escaped to the Mountain Area, the first thing they saw was the ogre staring at them through the exit cave.

The sisters split off, and were once again chased by a horde of demons and ogres.

“Who was the one who told us that demons are just reskinned skeletons again?” asked Sorami.

“SHUT UP! JUST RUN, OKAY!?”

“I wanna go hooome....” Moaned Sachiko from behind Uluru.

What kind of training simulation is this supposed to be? They said that this is a game that’s supposed to train Magical Girls, but even veterans like the sisters are having a hard time. How are newbies supposed to stand a chance?

At the Town, Uluru noticed new items being added to the shop. In addition to the usual items, there was now a mysterious box with an ‘R’ on it.

“What’s this R mean?” asked Uluru.

“Hmmm, according to the rules of the game... it’s like a lottery!” said Sorami.

“A lottery? Ah! Then Sachiko’s perfect!”

“Eh!?”

“C’mon Sachiko! It’s only 100 Magical Candies! I bet this is the key we need! You’ve practically got luck on your side!” said Uluru.

“O-Okay then...”

Sachiko deposited 100 Magical Candies, and got the R box. She opened the contents, only to find...

...Preserved Food.

“Well... It *is* based on luck. We should try again. C’mon Sachiko, you can do it!”

Sachiko nervously tried again and again, spending 100 Magical Candies four more times, each time they got Preserved Food.

“...Hey, this thing’s supposed to be random, right?” said Uluru irritated.

“I... I only have enough to buy one more,” said Sachiko.

Uluru nodded. “Do it. Sorami, use your magic to check the box, too.”

“Hmm? Ooookay”

Sachiko purchased the box, and gave it to Sorami. She placed her hands on it, calmly looking up at the sky while smiling.

She waited about 30 seconds, as if she noticed something.

Uluru stared at her sister, waving her hand in front of Sorami's eyes. "Hellooo, Sorami? You there?"

Sorami raised her right palm, signaling Uluru to wait. After a while, she smiled wider, and she nodded.

"I've got it!" she shouted.

"So what's inside the box?" asked Uluru.

"No, sis. Not the box, the game! This entire game is a closed space. That means I can use my magic to know everything about it! Aww, silly me... I should've noticed earlier!"

Sorami's Magical Skill is the ability to know the contents of anything sealed. It didn't matter if it was a box, a CD, a storeroom, or a pocket world of a game.

So long as there's no way in and out, and the space is closed from the outside, Sorami will know.

In fact, the more sealed it is, the more accurate Sorami's power becomes. Since the game is basically a pocket dimension, it's completely closed off to outsiders, meaning Sorami knows exactly where everything is.

Just earlier, the sisters had pale tired faces, but now, Sorami's face had regained her color again. She was far more confident once more.

Uluru gasped, and her face also regained color. Her eyes are now full of hope.

Sachiko got off of Uluru, her face was red and happy, and she hugged Sorami, her eyes full of tears.

"So you know everything about the game! We can get out of here!" said Sachiko happily.

“E-Er, sis... Don’t sway around so much, ehehe”

“Alright! Yes! Yes! Yes! Who would’ve thought we got our own living cheat code! Amazing work, Sorami! As expected of the member of the guard,” said Uluru proudly.

“W-Wait, sis... It’s not as easy as that. Don’t get the wrong idea,” said Sorami nervously.

Perhaps it’s faster to actually show her sisters than trying to explain everything.

Sorami took a deep breath.

“Hey, follow me!” she said as she ran off.

Uluru and Sachiko looked at each other, and tried to keep up with Sorami, who was uncharacteristically faster for once.

Sorami usually hates not being idle or being lazy, so it’s unnatural for her to suddenly be active and running like this.

Meaning that if Sorami decided to be active, there’s something important she wants to show them.

The three sisters are faster than the average Magical Girl. They trained in Puck Manor almost every day, learning how to run and some basic combat.

They entered the Cave Area. Sorami stopped at an intersection.

“Alright, follow me closely, okay? There’s traps all around here,” she said, urging caution.

Sorami entered the crossroads and easily found the hidden doors required to get past the traps and mazes. She found the right key to open the locked doors almost immediately, as if she had an entire strategy guide in her head.

Finally, they reached a grand room, and Sorami pointed at something.

“That’s the Great Dragon. If we wanna escape the game, we have to kill it.”

In the room was a gigantic dragon, bigger than the normal dragons found in the Cave Area. This dragon was about twice as long, and had twice the wingspan.

The large size of it, combined with the confined arena-like shape of the room means that there's almost no way to fight it other than head-on.

"A-Are you sure it's safe to be here?" asked Sachiko nervously.

"Haha, don't worry! As long as you don't go over the red line, we're safe. If you over it, the Great Dragon will instantly burn you. The flames are instant death, so be careful," said Sorami.

"How are we supposed to beat that? What equipment do we need?" asked Uluru.

"Hmm, since we're still in Tutorial Mode, according to the stats I've seen in the game, we'd need at least +3 stuff to beat it. For now, let's all go back to Town!" said Sorami happily, dragging her sisters away again.

The sisters went back to the nearest Town, headed to the bar, and ordered three glasses of wine.

"You're seriously suggesting that we fight that thing head on?" asked Uluru.

"There's no other way to get out of the game," said Sorami.

"Okay... Well... You're *sure* we'd need +3?"

"It's the best we can get for now, but be careful of the flames. There's about a 1/10,000 chance of surviving a hit."

Sachiko quietly drank her whole bottle of wine. Her cheeks became red, and her eyes were glazed.

Suddenly, her head slammed the table, and she was fast asleep. Uluru took a small glance at her sister, and decided to leave her be, chalking it up to tiredness.

"Do we have any kind of plan? Maybe we should, I don't know, level up?"

“This game has no level-ups, sis. It’s all equipment-based. It mimics real life, otherwise.”

“What about critical hits? Can’t a critical hit work?”

“Not in the way you think. Other than equipment stats, this game is a simulation of real life, but we’re no longer all-powerful here,” said Sorami.

Sachiko climbed up on the table. Her eyes were glazed, and her cheeks were red. She looked tired and irritated.

Only then did they notice that Sorami’s wine glass was also empty, and being held by Sachiko.

Uluru looked at her sister with surprise. “S-Sachiko... Wait, the wine here affects Magical Girls?”

“Er... Ehehe, well, this is a training simulator for Magical Girls, so Magical Girls get affected by hunger and alcohol here,” said Sorami.

Sachiko took out a large piece of paper from her dress. She laid it out on the table. She groggily pointed at it.

“We neehd... To use thish... Got it?” said Sachiko.

Sachiko’s contract is her Magical Skill. With the contract, there’s a guaranteed success for any action or event you wish to happen. Though, the downside is that after that, you’ll be plagued with extreme bad luck. Usually means death.

Uluru gulped. “Er... Sachiko, you’re drunk. You usually aren’t so eager to use your magic. I don’t think that’s a good idea, y’know? Since you could... er... die and all.”

Sachiko grumbled angrily. She got on all fours and crawled closer to Uluru.



“I’m not saying we ushe it... My magic... *hic* ... worksh for monshters too! It worksh for *anything* that can wrah... write! They’re all... Enn Pee Shees anyway!”

“I... don’t think they’d agree to that if they know the risks, Sachiko. They have no guarantee, and we can’t prove that it works to them without

using it ourselves,” said Uluru, getting even more nervous as Sachiko got angrier.

Sachiko pointed her finger and thrust it at Uluru’s chest, pushing her backwards as she crawled forward.

“Are you seriously *this* dense!? You can LIE TO THEM... YOU LIAR... Thatsh your THING!!! ISN’T IT!?”

“WAAH... Okay... Okay, calm down, Sachiko!”

Sorami patted her older sister in the back. She was just as nervous as Uluru as well.

“Ahaha, sis, I think what Uluru meant was that she can’t speak to the monsters, even if she wanted to.”

Sachiko turned her glare over to Sorami, who also backed away, partly out of fear. Sachiko’s face was all red, and her face was that of annoyance and anger.

“We HAVE... A TRANSHLATOR!!!” said Sachiko, putting out her Magical Phone, showing them the *Translator-Kun* app.

Sorami and Uluru looked at each other, realizing that it was that simple all this time.

They went towards a horde of demons and ogres, Uluru using the *Translator-Kun* app to talk to the monsters. *Translator-Kun* isn’t just able to translate fictional game languages, but any language into any other language.

That included the monsters’ speech.

“If you defeat the Great Dragon, you’ll get anything you ever wanted! To defeat the dragon, you need to all sign this contract!” said Uluru.

The monsters happily agreed, and with over a hundred Sachiko-powered demons rushing for the Great Dragon, the fight ended very shortly.

The fires never hit the horde, and even if it did, only light burns happened. Everything seemed to happen just according to the horde's favor.

The dragon would lose its footing, the horde would be able to outmaneuver it, every strike caused the dragon pain, and in only 3-5 minutes, the Great Dragon was defeated.

The three sisters exited the store room, only to find Keek groaning and rubbing her forehead, and Puk Puck and Tot Pop wrapping their hands around each other's shoulders.

"Oh hi girls! Hope that didn't take too long! I was just making friends with these two and my best buddy, Tot Pop!"

"Yep! Sorry you missed out on the fun! Don't worry though, Tot's got your back if you ever need her!" said Tot Pop grinning.

"Anyways, your proposal sounds pretty good if it's true, Keek. So I think I'll sponsor the project," said Puk Puck.

"REALLY!? So you'll give me the funding? The Yen I need?" asked Keek, her face grinning with happiness.

"Yep! Just so long as it passes its first trial stage, okay?" said Puk Puck.

"O-Of course! I already have a personal Beta ready for release-"

"WAIT! DON'T release that Beta!" said Uluru.

Puk Puck and Keek tilted their heads.

"Oh? You girls know about the Beta?" asked Puk Puck.

"We played it back in the room, yeah... I have some suggestions if you're actually going through with this game," said Uluru.

"E-Er, well... I'd say that the public version will-"

"Now, Keek... You just got a free test from my daughters! You should listen to their opinions and change the game accordingly, okay?"

"O... Okay... Lady Puck," said Keek, shrugging her shoulders.

Uluru then filled out the questionnaire, not hesitating to lash out at any criticism.

First, you need to have some kind of Map .

Uluru's experience with the game relying on Sorami's magic meant that it was near-impossible to find a map.

Lower the damn difficulty! That mountain area's impossible to go through!

Hordes of demons waiting for you isn't really the best option.

The Great Dragon is too powerful. Make the arena larger, give some breathing space, and make sure the equipment they need can ACTUALLY defeat it!

There was no possibly way of beating the Great Dragon without Sachiko's luck magic. It's as if it was rigged to be unbeatable.

Solving HUNDREDS of puzzles in the Mountain Area? Just one really hard puzzle is enough!

It took them over 2 weeks to complete that Mountain Area. That's far too long to spend in the game.

You don't need people to backtrack. And STOP THE BACKTRACKING! Make enemies beatable in the area you're in !

Uluru didn't like that she had to grind in a previous area to beat the current area's enemies.

NPCs are useless. Either make them smarter or get rid of them entirely

.

There really was no useful NPCs that they encountered, and they just seemed to be there for show.

Why is there a medieval town almost EVERYWHERE? Make it fit. Simple is better. The entire purpose of the Town is for the Shop. That's pretty much what we always did.

No need for extra clutter.

Uluru gave the paper over to Keek, who looked it over with a nervous smile. She glanced at Puk Puck, who simply smiled back, slightly threatening.

The three sisters went back home with their mother, and along the way, Uluru felt sorry for whoever had to go through that hell of a game.

At least she made it easier. Was that supposed to be a training simulator or some kind of death gauntlet!?

On the ride back home, her sisters slept besides her, tired from all the things they did in that game.

If there's one enjoyable experience, it's that the three sisters bonded closer, playing a game together. Something they haven't done in a long while.

Despite everything, Uluru loved her sisters, and enjoyed those kinds of experiences.

Have Our Real Lives Been Fulfilling?

**This story takes place before Magical Girl
Raising Project: JOKERS**

“My job really isn’t working out.”

With a sigh, three people were reading the menu. “This doesn’t taste delicious.” “Oh my, they still serve this?”

Three people were seated in a table. One of the people turned her eyes over to Kafuria.

“What would you call ‘working out’, then?”

Kafuria tilted her head and smiled, letting out a small chuckle. The coffee was already cold.

“A job where I can get lots of money, of course. Is there anything better than that in a job?”

“How about a job where you meet lots of people?”

“Meeting people? If you’re trying to set me up with a man, I’ll pass.”

The three of them burst out into laughter. Kafuria lightly tapped her fingers on the table.

“Oh, Kafuria... You’re killing me, here, haha!”

“Hahaha! Have mercy, please! Ahaha!”

“But would you do it though? A job that involves meeting a lot of people?”

“Well, if we didn’t meet you, we wouldn’t be here talking about money, would we, Kafuria?”

Kafuria gently grabbed her cup and drank from it. It had to be gentle. Too much strength and the cup might break.

They’re currently sitting in a table at a local café in town. This café was a Cosplay Café.

Magical Teatime .

Oftentimes, the Café lends costumes to customers, but they also welcome outside cosplay, so long as it’s not anything socially

unacceptable. Even then, the rules are pretty lax, so just about anything goes.

Because of the nature of the café, plenty of Magical Girls chose this as a meeting spot to just come and talk. It works because everyone else just thinks these Magical Girls are cosplayers.

These kinds of Cafés existed all over Japan. Filled with decorations, plush dolls on shelves, figurines lined up, posters from Anime 10 years ago until now.

There was a girl who cosplayed an Anime character laughing alongside another customer.

Here, Magical Girls blended in with humans. There were Magical Girls as both customers and workers in the Café. As both of them were allowed to cosplay.

“Whoa... amazing cosplay!” “What about that one!” “Who’s that supposed to be?” “Cool outfit!”

Sometimes, customers would ask permission from the cosplayers to take pictures of them as well.

With a short breath, Kafuria continued.

“Actually, there was a job I had that involved meeting people. It was about... two, three years ago? In the Public Relations Division. I was in a party there”

“Two or three years? Nothing more than that?”

“It’s a little weird, but it’s Kafuria’s story, so let’s give her a chance to tell it.”

As they talked, Background Music played from inside the Café. At first the Opening of a Battle Anime, then the Ending of a Love Comedy Anime.

When the music stopped, Kafuria told her story.

“A man kept approaching me. He seemed to be part of the industry, so he kept going up to me. He said, ‘I’ve had it with these Anime Magical

Girls who are all superficial'. He told me, 'You, now someone like *you* is perfect! A Japanese-style Magical Girl! We need more of those!' He doesn't seem to mean anything bad by it, of course. He's not from the Land of Magic, but he seems to be a veteran of the Anime industry."

"Wow, Kafuria, the next idol. Is it going to be that kind of story?"

"No, no. I remember saying how I'm not cut out for Anime."

"What? But why?"

"Do *you* think I'm cut out for an Anime?"

"Well, I mean... It's kind of the trend nowadays isn't it?"

"Hmhm. Regardless, I wanted to get to know him still."

"Cause obviously there's *loads* of honest hardworking people, huh?"

Kafuria laughed, then settled into a wide smile. Because her face was mostly hidden through her veil, she had to express herself using her mouth only.

"So, I gave him my contact address"

"Huh!? Why?"

"Because he praised my figure as a Magical Girl. If he saw me in my human form, he'd probably think I'm a fraud, no?"

"Well... I mean, I guess?"

"But was it a good meeting, Kafuria? I mean, you didn't even show your human face! You should've done that!"

"Oh, please don't tell me what I can and shouldn't do. It's rather thirsty talking about these kinds of things. Excuse me, waitress? Can I have the... *End of the World Milkshake* please?"

A cup of milk was handed over by the waiter dressed like an Anime character, and was placed on the table.

Instantly, it was swiped by another girl. This girl had a large afro, a funky-looking silver outfit, and very clearly a Magical Girl.

She swiped the milkshake from the table and tilted it elegantly. Her movements were all elegant, unlike her fashion sense.

“Afro, why did you steal my milkshake?”

“Hm? This was your milkshake, Kafuria?”

“I ordered it?”

“Oh, my bad. I thought you ordered it for me!”

The other two Magical Girls chuckled and laughed at their banter. Kafuria frowned in her lips.

Kafuria wasn't angry though, because they were all very close. There were four Magical Girls here, all of them are Freelancers.

Freelancers are professional Magical Girls, not aligned with any sides or parties, but still used by them whenever they're needed.

“It feels rather nice that someone was willing to protect me out of their own goodwill, though.”

Kafuria. Her magic is ‘ *To know who will die first* ’. She doesn't usually explain her magic to people, because their reactions are usually the same.

Disgust, fear, and sometimes if she's really unlucky, they might get angry if she reveals things. It's normal for her to get shouted at sometimes.

But she quite enjoyed her mourning costume. During the event where almost every costume was outlandish. She thought she wouldn't fit in with it usually.

“So why'd you wanna get close?” asked a Kitsune Magical Girl, tilting her head to the side.

Kokuri-Chan. Her magic was ‘ *To move coins freely* ’. She's also a very superstitious girl, prone to saying “if you do that, you'll get cursed!” whenever someone did anything bad.

She never misused her magic.

“So you never had any bad feelings about him at all?”

A Magical Girl with green hair and twintails said.

Negino. Her magic was ‘ *To generate the smell of green onions* ’. In a certain event with onions, she’s the one Magical Girl who doesn’t let others tag along. That event only happens once a year.

Her magic is really only useful when you want to have the smell of onions.

“Magical Girls mingling with normal humans usually leads to misery, right?”

The Magical Girl with a huge afro.

Auro.

Her afro acts just like a magical guardian. It’s never disturbed, no matter what happens to it. She puts her Magical Phone there, she puts her writing utensils in there too.

She mostly places any small items in her always-perfect hair, to be used later.

No matter how many things you do to it, it’ll always keep a perfect afro shape in the end.

Sometimes that can get annoying. For example, in narrow places, where the afro can be too huge, and won’t fit due to it retaining its shape.

All of these girls were Freelancers, sitting on a table in a café.

Working for no one, yet at the same time, working for almost everyone. From the point of view of ordinary Magical Girls, they’re usually treated somewhat like Dead Men Walking.

‘Salaryman Magical Girls’, ‘Sloppy’, ‘Nasty’. Some of them even think that most of these girls are simply unable to get a job because of their stupidity.

That’s far from the truth.

You can't be incompetent if you're trying to be Freelancers. Every time you have to be careful of deceiving employers, people who consider Freelancers as disposable.

For instance, Negino and Auro. Both of them were graduates of a famous battle school, Mao's School.

Negino placed number 6 in the 1000 meter-dash. Auro was Best 8 in the arm-wrestling competitions.

Still, even with that, they weren't really invited as part of Mao's elite circles, such as 'The 4 Emperors' or 'The 8 Devas'.

Meanwhile, Kokuri-Chan was from someone known for their rather brutal test methods.

She became a Magical Girl thanks to one of the tests of The Forest Musician, Clamerry.

"She seemed very enthusiastic, but always seemed to watch from a distance, and she always picked the best combatants and fighters. It's what's most necessary in the battlefield," is what Kokuri would say about Clamerry.

Kafuria was a bit different from them. The three of those Magical Girls doubted their strength, but Kafuria didn't really doubt hers.

She had wings to fly, scout, and is good at negotiating as well.

What really brought Kafuria with these four is the same common thread that all of them share.

Each and every one of them was equipped with rather... backwards Magical Skills.

One word for it is... *A bit shabby* .

One day they found out each other's Magical Skills in a common job. They all complained together, and every day after work, they began to keep meeting up.

They became regulars, and the reason for that is precisely because they all think their Magical Skill is stupid.

Their hangout became *Magical Tea Time* . “I can’t believe my magic isn’t of any help at all” and “Someone laughed at my appearance again” became regular topics for them.

“Y’know, I’ve got stalker incidents too before”

“What? A stalker for *you* , Auro? Lemme guess... Is it an Afro fetishist?”

“Worse. It’s a *hair* fetish!”

“And that’s why I hate men. They’re rather creepy”

“It’s not a man. It’s another Magical Girl. That’s right, I had a Magical Girl stalker.”

“And that’s why I hate women as well.”

“That means you hate both genders, Kafuria.”

“When you’re as old as me, you’ll understand the depths of human depravity, Negino.”

“I’m pretty sure we’re the same age.”

“Forget about ages, what ever happened to your stalker?”

“Well, she stalked me, then she showed up all of a sudden. She told me, ‘Oh your hair is very beautiful, but it’s just not my taste’”

“Oh, that’s cruel”

“I *know* !”

“Rather rude of her don’t you think?”

The four people sighed and looked at each other. Then they all drank their cups. Well, all of them except Kafuria. Auro stole her cup. Or, as she said it, she simply took the cup that was ordered *for* her.

“Money is more reliable than relationships anyway”

“Would you prefer talking about nicer stories?”

“Heard HR is gathering up a lot of people nowadays. Wonder what’s going on there?”

“Hang on, let me get my money”

“Oh, we’re good for the check?”

“Forget HR, how ‘bout the R&D? Anyone know what’s going on there?”

“I’m a little biased on that one, but they might be planning on making some experimental bodies”

“Is that so?”

“Well, we *do* have what you call *rare* magic. We’d probably fit in.”

“Look, I don’t want them to know about me before I transform, but I think if they knew about me *after* I transform, they’d just be disappointed”

All four of them laughed at once. The bitter smiles and irony at something that’s funny, but still true.

They only stopped when Auro began messing with her hair. When Auro gets a bit tired of the stories, she unconsciously messes around with her hair.

The three of them knew that, so they all cleaned up and paid, knowing that Auro was zoned out of all of this.

Kafuria exited the café with shawls that hid her feathers. Usually, most Magical Girls would detransform back to humans when they want to go back home, so why does Kafuria not do it?

It’s actually simple.

Kafuria doesn’t want to do laundry. If her human form clothes get dirty, she has to change it, increasing her laundry workload. She often transforms in pajamas. So, detransforming in public to *that* ? Not an option.

She had no choice but to go home as a Magical Girl.

Although her costume is like a funeral mourning motif, she’s not really dressed for a normal funeral. In fact, like most Magical Girls, she stands out.

It seems very conspicuous if someone dressed like her began walking out in the streets.

It doesn't help even if she removed her veil.

Due to that, she often decided to fly away home, because it's much easier that way. Besides, she's not really concerned about people looking at her.

Usually, if she shows her face, people look at her with the face of admiration and praise, with children who point it out being shushed by their mothers.

But this is her form as a Magical Girl. Does that satisfy her self-esteem?

Now's not the time for that.

Over the years, her discussions with her friends have branched a lot of topics.

At first, they talked about how being a regular working Magical Girl was constraining, and how being a Freelancer was the way to go.

Magical Girls should seize their own freedom.

Now, they don't have that opinion anymore. A stable income of a regular job is actually enviable to them.

Since she can't do that, she has to now wander around looking for good jobs.

She took the bus, waiting at the bus stop. Again, ignoring the gazes of the surrounding people.

There was a vacant window seat ahead, and she was about to step forward towards it, when suddenly.

"Excuse me, you dropped this."

A middle school boy.

He didn't even look at Kafuria's outfit weirdly. He handed over a handkerchief with a smile.

Kafuria recognized the handkerchief. It was hers.

"Oh my, thank you kindly."

She sat on her seat and closed her eyes, thinking about that man.

“You have that ‘Japanese-Style’ elegance”

Before, she jokingly told the story to her three friends. Really, she was a lot more worried than what she let on.

At that time, he praised Kafuria’s looks, and Kafuria wondered,

“Do you think I’d be suitable for an Anime?”

And the man shook his head. Hearing his words of denial, Kafuria was angry at the time, but now she realized he meant it as a sincere thing.

Kafuria knew that most Magical Girls in the Public Relations Division are the glamorous beauties of the Magical Girl world.

And yet, that man praised Kafuria without any want of a job.

How Kafuria wished she actually gave him his contact address. Every time she thought of that, she regretted her choice over and over again.

She lost count of how many times she regretted it.

Kafuria shook her head. It’s quite a big leap to make from a boy who handed her her handkerchief to that man who praised her long ago.

She turned her eyes outside the window. A frog doll was outside a pharmacy. She forgot why she wanted to become a Magical Girl in the first place.

She had forgotten a time when she finally noticed her magic was bad. She returned her eyes to the bus. She didn’t want to think about it, because she didn’t want to remember.

She gently looked around. It was a holiday, but the inside of the bus was a little crowded.

There was a woman sitting, some schoolgirls chatting, but in front of her, a skull mark floated on the head of the person sitting just in front of her.

It was a boy, in middle school. The same boy who picked up her handkerchief.

Since he was the only one in sight, the skull mark would obviously point towards him.

But then...

...Even with other people in her field of vision, the skull mark kept floating above the boy's head.

For Kafuria, seeing the skull mark was part of her life. She'd lose a lot of sleep if she kept stressing out about it.

But having someone so young made her uncomfortable. If she would, she'd find a way to deal with it.

People should die in the order of their age.

That's what she believed.

There were plenty of older people in sight, but the skull again was still in the boy's head.

There were people around the age of the boy's parents in the bus. An old woman with a cane, and her grandson also passed by. An old man was even sitting nearby too.

All of them didn't change the skull. That boy is the first to die.

...Still, should she intervene.

The skull mark isn't absolute. Kafuria can see it, but it doesn't guarantee the first death... if Kafuria would intervene.

Still, because the cause is unknown, intervening can have unpredictable results.

It may change, or it may not change. If it did change, it could also change to a worse outcome.

Still, if she *didn't* intervene, then the skull mark is guaranteed. Kafuria still decided not to intervene just yet.

She kept watching over this boy. It could just be an incurable disease. But If it's an accident related to the bus, she'll grab him and fly away.

If that's the case, the skull mark might disappear. But what happens to Kafuria in that case?

Even if it's just this boy, Kafuria really didn't know if 'first to die' meant 10 seconds or 10 years.

So Kafuria really didn't know when she should act, if at all.

The bus stopped at a shabby supermarket. A lot of people went inside the bus. It's wintertime, so warmth is desired by everyone. The bus became a lot more crowded.

Kafuria flaunted her veil and it fanned her face.

The bus began to leave again, and Kafuria looked back at her original view.

Something strange is happening. The skull was floating in the boy's head. That much hasn't changed. However, now another skull was floating in a woman in her 20s, sitting just next to him.

There was also a skull floating on the heads of two high school girls sitting right next to each other across the aisle.

Kafuria's Magical Skill is usually accurate, but not to the point of measuring a unit of time in seconds.

From her experience, she knows that people who die within seconds of each other were counted at the same time by her powers. Meaning that mass deaths at the same time can cause multiple skulls to appear.

Kafuria rubbed her eyes and looked forward.

The boy. A woman. Two schoolgirls. Four people.

Then she noticed something else. Another person had a skull on them.

The driver.

The order of death was too unnatural. This must be caused by an accident. Was it an explosion? Perhaps the fuel tank or the engine was going to blow up.

But the position is too far away for all of them to be affected. Maybe it's a fall, or a crash.

Kafuria stretched out her hands to grab the emergency stop buzzer. These people need to stop and get out of the bus.

What kind of disaster will this bus suffer? She didn't know, but she knew it *will* happen.

Her powers have never been wrong before, so she had to act now.

"A-AH, I-I'm sorry! My stomach! It hurts! I need help... There's a hospital nearby! Please stop here!"

Kafuria lurched forward, feigning stomach illness. She shuffled through the crowd, the bus stopped, and Kafuria paid her coins to the driver as she got off.

As she looked back at the bus, she noticed that the skulls were still on the people inside, and hadn't changed at all.

"Well, this is bad..." muttered Kafuria.

Five minutes later.

The bus stopped at the bus stop in front of a middle school. Normally, on weekdays, a bunch of children will go in or go out of the bus. But it's a weekend now, so only a couple of people got down.

But the bus won't move from there. Kokuri-Chan had already boarded the bus, and the coin machine was having problems.

500 Yen coins kept being pushed out of the changer. Thanks to Kokuri-Chan's magic, it won't stop.

The bus driver hurriedly called his company, and the passengers inside were all murmuring in confusion.

As the machine kept spitting out coins, friendly passengers began helping the bus driver pick it up.

Meanwhile, Kafuria flew up in the sky. In the daytime, even if you're flying at high speeds, the chances of being spotted is still high.

The Land of Magic doesn't like Magical Girl sightings. They try their best to make those sightings urban legends.

But this is an emergency. Kafuria had no time to think about the small details like that.

She left the bus to Kokuri-Chan. She told her that if she noticed anything bad about to happen that she should just get out.

Now, she's bought enough time to figure out the cause.

Given the size of a bus, an accident would cause a lot of deaths. It's not unusual for multiple people to die in a bus crash, especially those sitting in the front.

Kafuria alone is not enough to stop it. She'd need multiple Magical Girls to help her out.

From the sky, Kafuria scanned the ground for anything that could cause a bus accident. She looked at the bus's usual route. Soon she found it, a vehicle exceeding the legal speed limit.

She confirmed that the driver was driving recklessly. Even if he avoided the bus, he'd cause an accident somewhere else.

Kafuria flew higher, following the Tanker Truck. At the same time, she used her Magical Phone to give instructions to Negino and Auro.

I found the cause of the accident. It's a drowsy truck driver. I'm following it right now.

Later, she saw Negino point her palm from the sidewalk towards the Tanker Truck. Soon, the odor of green onions would appear.

The truck's inside was filled with the stench of green onions. That should wake the driver up. The only problem was...

...It was a little too much.

The driver jolted awake, violently maneuvering the steering wheel in an attempt to maintain control of his truck.

Various cars veered out of the way, and the truck became completely out of control.

Although it's great that the driver was awake, this is not the ideal situation.

A large spherical shape soon appeared in front of the truck. It was Auro. From the sky, her afro seemed to be huge.

She tilted her body forwards, her hair receiving the brunt of the truck at full speed. The force of the truck caused friction, and Auro's hair began burning.

However, thanks to her magic, her hair didn't get damaged at all, despite the flames.

Despite stopping the truck, she couldn't stop the momentum of the truck. As the truck came to a stop, she was flung backwards.

Negino quickly jumped into the roadway and caught Auro. Kafuria rapidly descended from the sky.

The three Magical Girls were near the Tanker Truck. The driver must've stopped the truck, since earlier there was a braking sound that was ringing.

It came to a stop, with plenty of skid marks behind it.

The three of them quickly rushed up near a building and went to the roof. Down at the scene, many cars stopped and people were gathering around.

Police cars and ambulances arrived as well. The Tanker Truck driver was outside and coughing.

Negino laughed.

"I think I *may* have made it a bit too strong."

"Oh, very funny. This shouldn't be something you should laugh about!"

“Hey, everything turned out fine, right? Besides, it’s the driver that didn’t get enough sleep. Maybe he’s being overworked.”

Auro smiled with her hand covering her mouth.

“Y’know, we could just do this for a living.”

“We can think about that later. For now, I have to go, I’ve got a bus to catch,” said Kafuria as she flew away.

She went to reconfirm the skull marks on the bus. She wasn’t sure of anything yet until she saw them.

While flying, she smiled thinly.

It’s been a while since she’s helped people with their magic.

Actually, it’s probably the first time they all succeeded. All of them. It’s a once in a lifetime event.

The smell of onions.

Giant afros.

Moving coins.

All of them were pretty useful back then. Perhaps that should be the topic for their next meeting.

How can you help people with the magic that you’ve been given?

That would be a nice topic to talk about.

Fairy of the Examination Division

**This story is set before Magical Girl Raising
Project: Limited**

On that day, the Examination Division was busy, from day to night. There was a big event being held, and many Examiners around the world were being invited on a training seminar.

Setting up the guest chairs, mats, and food and drinks for the guests were hard work, but it's not every day they can do this.

The Examination Division is probably the busiest Division of them all. They get reports and calls almost daily from around the world.

A large incident that happened recently in South America for example.

Even though they're based in the Land of Magic, the Examination Division acts as a police force, even in the Human World.

So long as the crime is committed by a Magical Girl, they have the right to investigate and arrest the culprits.

Recently, there was a bank robbery that happened in New York. Sometimes the crime is small like these, but they're still crimes being committed by Magical Girls.

The Examination Division tries not to be political, but it's hard when some criminals' agendas are political by nature.

"Come on, people! We're operating at half power here!"

"Hana! How's the sitrep on the robbery case?"

"I'm working on that, wait for a bit, okay?"

"Don't forget, you still need to investigate the case on that Magical Girl who shouts her attack names. She shoots a beam as her power. Oh, also, a Magus school got attacked recently."

"Okay, okay! I'm not a miracle worker, work with me here, alright?"

"How's our stock of Magical Items?"

"Magic Carpets are still available in the warehouse and our Healing Medicine's still in stock, we're good."

Magical Girls, both the ones that work the desk job and the ones that worked in the field both shouted and spoke to each other.

Several Examiners were walking back and forth. It's gotten so complicated recently that volunteers from Foreign Affairs have tried to lend a hand.

These are Mao's School students.

"Need help?" they would ask, to which the Examiners would just say that it's fine.

In times of emergency, there isn't really a set position for the Examination Division. The Examiners can easily switch from desk work, to chores, to fieldwork, when necessary. It helps keep work environment flowing.

The Magical Girl Jail Warden, *Filuru*, has several reasons for taking an arresting course in the Examination Division.

Firstly, she gets assigned to the front lines. Being in the front lines, out on the field, means that she can sharpen her own combat skills.

Secondly, she wanted to get a promotion. A job better than just a Warden. If she receives this certificate for passing the course, she'll receive a paycheck of roughly 5,000 Yen.

In order to enter most Magical Girl facilities, at least the ones that are secret, you'd usually have to go around alleyways and secret paths before pressing some kind of trigger to enter the building.

Filuru works mostly in America, but was originally from Japan. She tends to use the Gates to travel between the two countries. Saves up a lot of time and money.

Sometimes when she returns to one country, she'd buy souvenirs from the other country, for her friends and co-workers.

To use the Gates, first you need to place your hand on a biometric scanner, then enter a password unique to your ID, then write off on what you plan to use the Gate for.

Magical Gates were developed rather recently. It's a modern form of magic. At first glance, it may seem to be a simple gate, nothing but concrete underneath. However, it's possible to instantaneously visit multiple different locations through the use of these Gates.

First, you go into the gate, then, a bright light wraps around you, and once it fades, you should be at your destination.

Filuru went back from the American Gate. However, something was wrong. When she reconfirmed the receptionist at the front of the Gate. She claimed that she had no idea what Filuru was talking about.

The receptionist asked her to sit on the sofa. She said she'll investigate what's happening.

Half an hour later...

"I apologize. This isn't the Examination Division HQ. This is Foreign Affairs."

You took half an hour to explain something so fundamental!?

Filuru had about half a mind to lash out at the receptionist, but she didn't want to make a fuss in here.

Also, the receptionist was actually very intimidating. Filuru was a bit scared of her. Not to mention, it's technically Filuru's fault. She set up the Gate coordinates, so she's the one at fault.

With a sigh, she stepped into the Gate again.

This time, the room she went into was still different.

However, unlike the dignified appearance of the Foreign Affairs Division, this room was... rather fabulous.

The people walking around look like models or entertainers.

Ah... This isn't Foreign Affairs. This is Public Relations .

There was a small ferret-like Mascot Character running around, looking like he was crying.

Filuru checked her destination once more, trying to input the correct address into the Magical Gate.

Next time she used it, the interior that she found herself in was wooden. Like those old schools you see in movies.

The Foreign Affairs Division had black concrete.

The Public Relations Division had pearly white walls.

This one looks to be more practical than style. After all, what's the point of looking good, so long as you fulfill your job.

Filuru's chest tightened up. Hopefully this was the right place. She walked inside and headed for the receptionist.

But there was no receptionist. There was no bell, no buzzer, nothing to call for anyone.

"Hello! Excuse me! Is anyone home?" shouted Filuru in a loud voice.

No reply.

No signs of anyone coming out of the back either. She kept trying, making her voice louder every time.

Five minutes into it and Filuru was getting desperate. She was extremely late. The training seminar had probably already begun.

Although it seems better to just give up, Filuru already spent so much time, she didn't want it to be wasted.

There wasn't a single person in there.

She looked around again, and again, and again. Still no one here.

The room itself is about twice the size of a regular high school gymnasium. It's wooden, so it gives this old-school vibe, but it's just as solid as your regular Division building.

These facilities are designed to never collapse, no matter how strong a Magical Girl tries to destroy it. Often, the walls are even more enhanced with enchantments and magic.

There was a mountain of tatami mats lying around the corner. Naturally, the mats were also strengthened.

This Division clearly has more budget than Filuru's.

Ah, a larger budget means a better paycheck at least. Wonder how much they offered.

"Oh, a visitor!"

Just as Filuru was thinking about money, a voice called out to her. Looking back, Filuru was just as shocked as the Magical Girl before her.

A Policeman motif, with sirens hanging out of the side of her waist. On her shoulders, were gigantic handcuffs.

In other words, this girl looked like she fit right in with the Examination Division.

Filuru waved her hands. "Oh, thank goodness! I was starting to get worried that no one would show up."

"Ahaha, it's fine! Name's Patricia."

Contrary to her policeman outfit, her tone is quite casual and polite.

"Ah, my name's Filuru. Nice to meet you!"

"Pleasure's all mine! Wow, it's really empty in here, isn't it."

"Yeah, it is. Excuse me, but... You wouldn't happen to know where everyone is, would you?"

"Hm? Not a clue."

"Oh, well... Like I said, I'm in a bit of trouble here, and I'm kind of late for an event, so if you could just point me the right way?"

"Seriously? I'm late too!"

Huh?

For some reason, something doesn't check out. Patricia was showing a shocked expression on her face too.

"W-Wait, what do you mean you're late, too?" asked Filuru.

“...You’re not from the Examination Division?” asked Patricia.

“No, no, I’m actually going here as a student. Aren’t you from the Examination Division?”

“Er... nope.”

Well, that’s just great. Not only did Filuru not find anyone, but she found someone with the exact same problem she had.

That usually won’t solve anything at all.

“What do you think we should do?”

“Well... This place is pretty big. We should go look around!”

“But there’s no one here so far. Hmm...”

No need for thinking it over. It’s best to do what Patricia suggested and look around some more.

Suddenly, Patricia looked behind Filuru. She grabbed Filuru’s shoulder and pointed out somewhere while shouting out.

“Heeeey!!! Hellooooo!!! Over here!”

Filuru looked back. Patricia was shouting at the mountain of tatami mats.

“I see you!!! Hellooooo! You over there! Behind the tatami mats! I’m talking to *you* !”

Filuru didn’t notice it at first, but she realized what Patricia was pointing at. The shadow of a person hiding behind the tatami mats.

Just then, a girl peeked out from underneath the mats.

This was definitely a Magical Girl.

Black and white stripes, leather bow, a strange cross-shaped guitar, and a lip ring. She looked like a Rockstar, dressed outlandishly.

The girl smiled nervously, peeking out of the mats.

“Heeeey! It might *look* like I’m hiding in here like some kinda bad guy, but that’s way too obvious, so that can’t possibly be true! Don’tcha worry

about it! Tot's a proper Magical Girl!"

Filuru hoped that she wasn't another lost student like her. She didn't even bother expressing any relief, just in case. Instead, she went straight for the question.

"Are you from the Examination Division?"

"Of course she is! Look at her!" said Patricia.

What are you talking about, Patricia? She looks like an escaped convict who moonlights as a death metal Rockstar.

Of course, Magical Girls' appearances shouldn't be the only thing that should be judged, but if Patricia's going for that excuse, then it makes no sense at all.

Well, best to just go with it.

"If you're in the Examination Division, you mind telling us what's going on?" asked Filuru.

"Ah, right! I also wanna know! Where is everyone? Filuru and I are the only ones here."

The Guitarist Magical Girl began to scratch her forehead.



“Ah... Hmm...” she mumbled to herself.

It looks like she has no clue what’s going on. However, just as Filuru thought that, the Guitarist smiled.

“Well, y’see... That’s a secret!” said the Guitarist.

“Huh? A secret?”

“Yeah, cause if you think about it... I should be asking *you* guys why you’re here. So, why *are* you here?”

“O-Oh, we’re here for the arresting course.”

“Ah! Right!”

The Guitarist knocked on her head and nodded.

She walked away from the tatami mat. She slowly began to reach for the exit while talking.

“Well, just like a fire drill, we’re not really supposed to tell you when the training begins, y’know? You just hear an alarm and you start pretending like it’s an actual fire, right? Sooo... The alarm’s already been rang, and now you pretend like there’s an actual fire! Arresting course begins! Welp, nice talking with ya! But I gotta go! Ciao!”

The Guitarist headed for the exit, but Patricia grabbed hold of her neck collar. The Guitarist gagged lightly as Patricia pulled her over between her and Filuru.

“Waiiit, hold up! We still don’t know what we’re supposed to be doing. What’s the course supposed to be like? Can’t you spare us a few minutes to teach it?” asked Patricia, forcing the Guitarist to stay in spot.

The Guitarist’s knees were slightly shaking, and she had a nervous smile on her face.

“Aha... I’d love to, but Tot’s a little busy, y’know?” said the Guitarist.

“It’s just the two people looking to learn! You can spare some time,” said Patricia, forcefully sitting down the Guitarist.

The Guitarist, Patricia, and Filuru sat down, making a triangle formation.

“I’ll start. My name’s Patricia. I’m a Freelancer. I’m real good at fighting.”

“My name’s Filuru. I’m a Warden.”

“Aha, Tot’s er... I mean Keek’s the name! I work in the Examination Division!”

Patricia raised her eyebrow.

“Keek? I thought you said your name was Tot... Several times.”

“Er... Yeah! My name *is* Tot... Keek. My name’s Tot Keek,” said the Guitarist with a nervous smile.

The whole situation looks very weird to Filuru. Patricia was smiling, and Tot Keek was laughing, but there was a certain tension here that Filuru didn’t really understand that well.

“Well, isn’t this fun, Tot Keek?” asked Patricia.

“Yep! Sure is, haha... Ha...”

Filuru could only smile politely. She was stressed out about a lot of things, so she couldn’t exactly understand what’s going on, but she might be missing something here.

Maybe the Examination Division has a communications requirement. Undercover missions would need you to adopt a suitable way of speaking, after all.

“So, Filuru, why’d you decide to take the course?” said one of the two girls.

“Huh?”

Filuru spaced out, and so she didn’t understand that she was being called for. When things like this happen, Filuru often answered the first thing that came to her mind.

“Well, I just thought if I can get promoted, I’d be able to get a raise. Higher paychecks and all that.”

...Like that.

Tot Keek chuckled to herself. “Well... Money *is* important!”

Patricia closed her eyes and nodded. “All joking aside, she’s right. Money’s pretty important, come to think of it.”

“Well, Tot doesn’t really have to worry about money! I’m pretty wealthy myself.”

“Eh? Seriously? You get lots of money from this job?” asked Patricia.

“Well... It’s more like a friend of mine gives me money. She’s kinda rich, so she donates a little to me sometimes,” said Tot Keek.

“...How much are we talking about?” asked Filuru curiously.

“1 Million”

“O-ONE MILLION?”

Patricia yelped out, saying several things at once. Asking to meet the person, expressing her jealousy, trying to sweeten up Tot Keek.

“How much do you normally earn anyway?” asked Tot Keek to Patricia.

“Me? Only a measly 200,000”

...That’s not measly. That’s more than I get.

“Oh, what currency are we talking about, by the way? I’m assuming US Dollars?” asked Patricia.

“Nah, I’m talking about Pound Sterling,” said Tot Pop.

Oh my god.

Filuru felt sick.

“Hm? Filuru? You okay? You look pale. You sick?” asked Patricia.

“Magical Girls don’t get sick,” said Tot.

“No, no! I’m fine, ahaha...” said Filuru weakly.

That’s a lie. She’s not fine at all. Once the talk became about salary, Filuru’s heart began to break.

Converting it to Japanese Yen was a bit difficult. 200,000 US Dollars, and 1 Million Pound Sterling!?

“Filuru, if you’re feeling off, maybe you should take a break from the course,” suggested Patricia.

“N-No! I’m fine, really!”

“Really? Magical Girl criminals can be dangerous y’know? You need to know how to best fight them, and be in top shape,” said Patricia.

I think it’s time to switch topics from salary and Filuru’s health.

“That’s why I wanted to join the arresting course!” said Filuru.

It looks like she caught the other girls’ attention with that.

“You see. There’s some really powerful Magical Girl criminals locked up in prison. Some have killed tens of thousands of people, so I wanna know how to best handle them, if they ever break out,” said Filuru.

“Ah, I see. Ambition should be rewarded! Well, I’m sure Tot Keek won’t mind showing us a few moves of her own, right?” asked Patricia.

“Eheh... Sure... Maybe,” said Tot Keek.

“Maybe? Don’t you Examiners have to be fighting all the time?” asked Patricia.

“Ah, well, sometimes! Not all of us fight. It’s different from Tot! I’m uh... I’m a desk jockey. Yeah, I work papers.”

“Hmm? You look like someone who’s been in fights before, though... But I guess even desk jockeys in the Examination Division can fight,” said Patricia.

Patricia’s eyes then widened.

“Oh, can you tell us any Examination Division secrets? I’ve always wanted to know one. A secret technique? A move? C’mon, we’ll keep it a secret too!” said Patricia.

“Er... I uh... Hmm... Ah! Did you know if you grab the ears of someone in the right place, you can stop their movements and even tell where they’re going?” said Tot Keek.

“Really? Now that I think about it, I do feel a bit weird if my ears get disturbed in some way,” said Patricia, grabbing her ears.

“Oh, that’s right! That’s cause the ears are the center of balance! It’s where all your movements are being made! But the right way to hold it is

a secret known only to the Examination Division,” said Tot Keek.

The whole scene looked bizarre. Patricia was grabbing her ears, trying to find the right spot. Even though it looked ridiculous, Filuru can't really complain.

Tot Keek was in the Examination Division, so she was like a hunter, catching her prey with intelligence and knowledge.

Patricia was a Freelancer, meaning any carelessness could lead to her death.

In comparison, Filuru was a Jail Warden. Basically, to take the hunter analogy, she's the zookeeper. Yes, she's guarding dangerous animals, but they're in bars, and it's not as life or death as these two.

Even though they seem a little weird at the moment, Filuru was afraid of them. They were so much better than Filuru in both skill and intelligence.

Suddenly, the noises of footsteps echoed across the room.

“Ah, you're here!” boomed the loud voice. It was the voice of a man.

The three Magical Girls stood up and looked at the source of the voice. It was a man in a suit and moustache.

“There seems to be a standoff happening in the villa just a bit from here. I've set the Gates to take you there. Gate number 6. No time to waste now, I'm expecting that taken care of, soon,” said the man, walking away afterwards.

“Alright! The class has officially begun! Gate 6, right? C'mon, Filuru, Tot Keek! We're headed there right now!” said Patricia.

“Eh? Me?” asked Tot.

“Sure! You'll be supervising us, right? C'mon!” said Patricia.

“Er... I guess... Sure, I... WHOA”

Tot Keek was pulled alongside Patricia.

When it comes to paychecks, Filuru loses against both of them, but when it comes to battle, Filuru won't lose to both. She'll prove she has

what it takes. For the sake of her and the pride of all Wardens in the Land of Magic.

When they exited the gate, they found themselves in England. They were outside some kind of manor. This was clearly a Mage's manor.

There was also some kind of strike, some angry Magical Girls and Mages on strike.

The gang figured out what was going on.

Because the Mage in charge of these strikers probably didn't give them enough payment, they decided to cause a strike and stop working.

In these kind of situations, the Examination Division is supposed to handle it when it gets out of hand.

Though, after all the talk about salaries, Filuru kind of wanted to side with the strikers on this one.

If this was supposed to be a simulation training, it truly crushed Filuru's soul.

Just remember, this is all fake. This is a training simulation. These people aren't actually in my situation .

75 square meters of land, surrounded by high stone fences. Vines and roses tangled in archways, decorating the paved stone paths. This was the stage that was set.

The leader of the strike, a Mage dressed in witch attire, had a red face.

“WAGES FOR MAGES! MAGICAL GIRLS DON'T WORK FOR FREE! WE DEMAND PROPER WAGES!”

Such acting skills. It almost seems real.

So the Examination Division hires actors too? Filuru became more and more impressed by the day. Though, the costumes were a bit much, she thought. It's a little off on the directing side, too.

“I think I see a barrier nearby, so we shouldn’t be worried about humans watching us,” said Patricia.

Filuru nodded. Preliminary information being received was rather annoying to remember, but this *is* a simulation after all.

Just before they arrived here, Filuru had already knitted several threads to her partners, and connected it to her index finger.

They entered the Mage’s manor, where several Magical Girls were still striking from the inside.

Patricia knocked down the entrance door with a kick. There was a scream, and just as quickly, a wicker chair was thrown towards the gang.

Patricia’s reactions were quick, and she kicked away the chair, destroying it instantly. Several Magical Girls ran off afterwards.

The chase was on.

Filuru broke off from the group and chased after some Magical Girls headed downstairs. The Magical Girls downstairs passed through a floor with a carpet.

Filuru smiled, grabbed the edge of the carpet, and with all of her strength, pulled it towards her. The Magical Girl running away fell down brilliantly.

Satisfied, Filuru held down the Magical Girl with her leg, while knitting a thread through her body.

Filuru’s threads cause no pain, and can sew through anything. She made sure to restrain the Magical Girl, dressed up like a handmaiden.

Another Magical Girl showed up before Filuru, and Filuru responded by creating a bow-like shape with her threads, and shooting another thread like an arrow straight to the Magical Girl, quickly knitting her and tying her up.

Upstairs, her partners had finished rounding up other Magical Girls, and Filuru tied them up as well, kicking them outside afterwards.

Patricia and Tot Keek were waiting for Filuru.

There was a reason why Filuru had decided to take care of a lot of the Magical Girls in the manor.

That's because a lot of people assume Jail Wardens are weak. Cheap, no salary, and all they do is just watch criminals from safety.

Filuru's here to prove them wrong. Filuru's useful, strong, and competent. She'll definitely show them that.

200,000 Dollars? 1 Million Pounds? Who cares! Filuru can do *so much better* !

Patricia led the way, Filuru was in the middle, Tot Keek was behind her.

As soon as they left the entrance hall to go deeper into the manor, they memorized the plans carefully.

Every three steps they take, Filuru sewed a thread on the floor. Then, they advanced. They went to a T-Shaped junction.

Filuru sewed threads to an armor stand. Specifically, the helmet part. They continued on.

Suddenly, the armor head came flying off, and it instantly hit a Magical Girl trying to sneak up behind them.

She fell down and groaned, as Filuru tied her up and sewed threads all over her body so that she couldn't move, carrying her on their backs.

It's impossible to sneak attack Filuru once she's laid so many threads in the area. The vibrations will be transmitted through Tot Keek, and she's fighting too.

Filuru's group continued onwards, with Patricia splitting up from the main group.

Filuru and Tot Keek kept going until they reached a room with a chest on it. Carefully, Filuru sewed threads on the chest.

She felt vibrations, which means someone was on the chest. She pulled on the chest and threw it towards a room.

She heard a scream when the chest was broken. It's useless to try and hide from them.

The two of them kicked the door to the room, and they saw a Magical Girl with a flickering costume.

Tot Keek strummed her guitar, Filuru quickly swung herself behind the Magical Girl. The Magical Girl dodged Tot Keek's notes, while at the same time dodging Filuru's surprise kick.

Tot Keek backstepped, maintaining her distance. She strummed her guitar. The three Magical Girls had already told each other their abilities.

Filuru caught the incoming notes with her threads, and dragged them across the room, attempting to hit the flickering Magical Girl.

The walls, floor, and ceiling. The bed broke with the notes as well. The Flickering Magical Girl was too fast.

Filuru retreated behind Tot Keek, tapping her shoulder.

"Can you adjust your timing? Match me, okay?" asked Filuru.

"She's just gonna avoid it again," said Tot Keek.

"Trust me. One more time!"

"Alrighty, it's worth a shot!"

Tot Keek strummed her guitar, and the Magical Girl dodged once more. But this time, Filuru was ready. She had already prepared a large net of threads when she was swinging around the room from before.

The net can't be dodged, because it surrounded the Magical Girl.

Filuru tightened up the net, and the Magical Girl began to trip, as she was suddenly being hit with a variety of invisible threads.

Tot Keek's notes then barraged the Magical Girl's body, who spasmed and screamed before falling unconscious.

Filuru looked nervous.

"...Wasn't that overkill?" she asked.

“It’s alright! I didn’t kill her. Besides, Examination Division training is like an actual battle!”

“Well... If you say so.”

Since Tot Keek was a member of the Examination Division, it should be fine. Filuru sewed the unconscious girl and threw her out of the window.

Then, she heard violent vibrations in her threads. Multiple Magical Girls were rushing the hallway.

Filuru gave hand signals to Tot Keek. Tot Keek nodded, faced the door, and strummed her guitar as fast as possible.

A group of Magical Girls were headed towards their location, but Tot Keek’s notes managed to knock down three of them.

Only one managed to dodge them all. Filuru’s threads pulled that one towards the room, then, she seamlessly transferred the thread to one that she prepared in the ceiling.

The Magical Girl was pulled up to a ceiling beam, crashing her head on the beam, and falling down unconscious.

Again, they were all sewn and thrown out the window.

Filuru and Tot Keek headed upstairs, running there. A Magical Girl was waiting for them, but with a swift kick to the chin, she was blown back and beaten.

“CAPITALIST DOGS!” yelled a voice from behind Filuru.

Just as quickly, Filuru dodged a longsword that was brought down to the floor. She also simultaneously tied the threads down, sticking the longsword Magical Girl down.

Tot Keek saw the signal and unleashed a barrage of notes to the longsword Magical Girl, knocking her out.

Even though this was a simulation, it was weird of them to call Examination Division officials ‘capitalist dogs’.

In the next room, there were about ten black creatures. Ten. They were outnumbered, clearly. Filuru retreated back into the previous room.

As she ran away, she sewed threads where she ran off. The black creatures kept chasing her, and when they were close by, Filuru pulled her threads to tie up the creatures in a large clump.

Tot Keek then used her notes to blow them all away.

In the distance, they saw a Magical Girl trying to produce more of these strange creatures.

Filuru acted fast, running towards the Magical Girl, then sliding as she got closer. She sewed the Magical Girl's legs, and jumped up to the ceiling, pulling her upside down, and tying her there.

The next room. Filuru kicked it open and...

...Patricia was kicking a Magical Girl outside a window, while three more lie unconscious in the corner.

Patricia saw the others and shrugged her shoulders.

"Hey. What's up? It's actually a bit boring in here," said Patricia.

"You doing good, Patricia?" asked Filuru.

"I'm fine. Are *you* doing okay, Fil? It's dangerous to go alone, y'know."

"I'm not alone, I've got Tot with me! Right Tot?"

Patricia scratched her head. Filuru looked back. Tot Keek wasn't there.

"Eh? She was with me a while ago..."

Filuru looked at the thread connecting Tot Keek to her. It seems to have been separated somehow.

"You sure you're alright? Didn't get hit in the head?" asked Patricia.

"That's weird... I swore she was with me..."

"So we have a scandal?"

Mana placed the cup of coffee on the table. She had already drunk some of it.

Hana refilled her own cup with tea. She picked it up and drank a bit of it.

There were only these two in the waiting room. Only Mana and Hana. Their voices were low, because what they're talking about is very sensitive.

The room they're in is a narrow room, surrounded by cabinets on three sides. Several investigation materials were listed.

A scandal on one of these investigation cases?

The two of them sighed.

"That man we questioned didn't even remember the names of the supposed Examiners. We never sent any!" said Mana.

"Sorry I couldn't help out though. I was busy with my own investigations that day."

"Still, these guys weren't from us. It looks like they wanted to join the arresting course."

"Oh, did they get lost?"

"Probably."

"So what *did* happen, Ma-Chan?"

"Looks like they thought the entire thing was a simulation for the arresting course, and ended up capturing almost every Magical Girl and Mage in that manor."

Hana drank more of her tea.

"But Ma-Chan, did you hear? Something seemed off."

"Off? You mean aside from all of this?"

"Yeah. There weren't two, there were three."

"Huh?"

“The man we questioned said there were three Magical Girls, but only two of them finished up.”

“...What is this, a ghost story?”

“The man told us her features, and the students told us her name, but we found nothing in the database.”

“Sis... You know I hate ghost stories... Don’t scare me like that. Not here at least.”

“Ahaha, I’m not trying to scare you! For all we know it might be a helpful Fairy of some kind.”

“Like, actual Fairy?”

“Probably. It wasn’t spherical so it can’t be Cyber. Maybe the Examination Division has their own Fairy somewhere.”

“Psh, an outcast Fairy.”

“Hey, those things can happen, y’know!”

Shogun Pukin's Case Files: Murder of the Mage

This story takes place hundreds of years before Magical Girl Raising Project

The sun was about to rise, coloring the skies orange as dawn approaches.

In the morning, the air was usually foggy. Not that it changed at nights, where it was also just as foggy. Normally, in these kinds of days, people tend to spend the nights at the local pubs, and the mornings asleep.

Not me. I had a job to do.

Buildings dotted the landscape, with lightning rods and cobbled rooftops in the skyline.

This was the city of London.

This was my home.

Early that day, I walked across the cobblestone path, taking my usual route through the darkened streets.

I made short laps across the alleyways, and took several twists and turns, only to make sure that people don't follow me of course.

In retrospect, it might have seemed like a bad idea to go around to all these alleys and slums when I'm dressed all proper like a gentleman, but had I just barged my way in to my destination, I can't guarantee anyone's safety, really.

Finally, I reached it, a large theater. They tend to play a lot of things on this theater. Mostly opera these days. I wouldn't know, I don't really spend my time going to this theater.

I've come here for different reasons.

The theater and the cobblestone road below me began to melt, as my vision struggled to keep its clearness.

It's not just the buildings and the roads, the skies began to melt as well, and my body felt like it's burning up.

I counted three seconds.

I've always done this since I was young, and what I've learned from it is this...

...I'll never get used to this. Ever.

I closed my eyes as usual. It's my defense mechanism for when it happens. Because really, if you don't close your eyes, you're going to feel like you're witnessing something that can only happen if you're off your medicine.

There's also the fact that your insides feel like they're being jumbled around like a kid shaking a box of toys, only to be properly placed once the process is over.

It only takes three seconds, but I can't bear even one.

Anyways, I opened my eyes, and my surroundings have changed.

In place of the theater, there was instead a large manor. The manor was surrounded on all sides by thick stone walls, like a fortress.

In front of me was a large steel gate. Larger than any human, and nearly unbreakable.

On the other side of the gate was a young lad, who opened the door kindly for me. I couldn't help but mutter out loud, "God, I'm tired..."

"Heard you working hard, inspector. Hope it's not just for show," said the guardsman.

"Well, he's expecting me, isn't he? You can say anything you want about me, but I ain't a quitter."

"You should take a break. Slow down and listen to the world for a bit. You heard about the American election? Apparently their next President is someone named Abraham Lincoln. Might cause some issues, that man," said the guardsman.

"I neither follow nor care about foreign politics, unfortunately. And when has politics *not* brought in issues? Anyways, can I go in?" I asked.

"Go right ahead. Oh, and Inspector..."

"Yes?"

"You still owe me those 8 Shillings," said the guardsman.

I waved him off, telling him I'll pay him back later. For now, it's time to walk up to the manor and find out what all this fuss is about.

As I opened the door, I saw a regular old manor, with about two floors separated by a large stairway in front of me. Of course, there was also a lobby.

Stepping inside, I was suddenly greeted by the feeling of something entering inside my skin. The shivers in my bones were almost instantaneous.

Firstly, I'm just a human. Secondly, I know enough about these Mages to know that if I'm not a Mage, I'm probably in trouble.

Ah yes, I have yet to tell you.

I'm an Inspector, in charge of most of the murders around this town. My first name's only known to my personal friends, though my last name is *Fateru*.

I know of the existence of the supernatural. I know of the existence of Mages.

Mages aren't too uncommon if you know where to look. In fact, they're fairly easy to spot, mostly because they're all higher-classed folk, with the resources and money available to pursue studies like magic.

I'm not the only one in on it, either.

The English government knows about the existence of Mages, though not as much as the Mages themselves are willing to share.

They help each other to maintain peace and security throughout the nation.

In fact, I know that some people in the government are supposedly Mages as well, which made it easier on them.

Since I work in Law Enforcement, I'm one of the lucky people who have been exposed to the existence of magic and Mages.

Now, let's get this clear. I know about Mages, but I don't know everything about them.

I know they get their training either here or in some place called the Land of Magic. I don't know the full details of it, or what kind of spells they can cast.

I've also been given files and instructions on how to behave in *this* particular Mage's home.

Speaking of which, that feeling of intrusion in my body? Gone now, luckily.

There was a man, balding, suit. Nice looking, very professional. He was a bit shorter than me, but he looked me over a bit, before declaring his name.

"Welcome to Hogelten Manor. I will be your guide. My name is Olgrave, Master Hogelten has been waiting for you," said Olgrave.

Seems to be the butler of the manor.

I was lead into a large lavish room, in the center of the room, was a man in a long robe, a long beard, and a cane that had a crystal skull on the top of it.

Besides him, however, was a strange creature.

It looked like a dog, a large one, but it was completely black, and its stare was that of a threat. Its claws were unnaturally sharp, it wouldn't have been made for anything but attacking.

The last time I remembered something like this was a long time ago, when Dr. Frankenstein tried to reverse-engineer something like this, with horrible results.

Either way, that thing is *not* a guard dog. It's an attack dog.

"You're late," said the Lord of the Manor himself, Hogelten.

"Apologies. It's rather early, so I hope you understand," I answered.

"I don't want *excuses* ! I pay my tax money, and where does it go if it only produces lazy Inspectors like you? You realize the killer could've killed *me* next, almost immediately, right?"

“Now let’s not be rash, Lord Hogleten. If you could just explain the situation, the crime, I can have a look,” I said.

“Bah! Like that’s going to help. The police have already done their initial search and found nothing! But if you insist, I’m assuming you have more of a brain than the police force, otherwise they wouldn’t have called you ‘Inspector’.”

“Just take me from the beginning, sir.”

We approached the dining hall. It was large, with a table that was able to fit perhaps at *least* 20 people.

On the back of the dining hall was a large golden-framed painting.

Wait, no. It’s not a painting.

It’s a large child’s drawing, in crayon. Depicting a large family, and an angelic looking girl above them all.

“You like the artwork, Inspector?” asked Hogelten.

“Er... It’s quite... interesting, if a bit lavish,” I replied.

“Well, of course! This artwork deserved the best treatment. Even my wife loved it. This was a gift from one of the Three Sages herself, Lady Puck,” said Hogelten.

“I don’t know much about the Three Sages business, Lord Hogelten. At the very least it seems quite... no offense, but... childlike,” I replied.

“You’re not an art critic, Inspector, and I’ll take your rudeness of the Sages some other time. Besides, you’re here to solve a mystery, not stare at art. So listen in!” said Hogelten.

Well, he was right.

Hogelten then began with the victim, Miss Hogelten. His wife, was murdered in her own room upstairs.

Miss Hogelten had invited many guests over towards the manor, in some fundraising party. She went over to her room at some point, and

then she wasn't seen in here for another 20 minutes.

Getting worried, Lord Hogelten came towards her room, found it locked, and ordered the guards to smash the door down, only to find her dead on the floor.

A locked room mystery.

It's not suicide either, as the murder weapon was in fact a knife, stabbed repeatedly to the chest.

Had it been suicide, she wouldn't have been able to stab herself multiple times before she would've died of bloodloss.

Not only that, but magic is out of the question.

You would think that magic makes a case harder to solve, as it eliminates the need for logic, when you can teleport and become invisible.

However, in these cases, magic would actually make the case *easier* to solve, because there are only so many Mages you'd need to investigate.

Unfortunately, as a sign of safety, Lord Hogelten has produced a barrier surrounding his entire mansion.

The barrier started from the ground level and went upwards, covering the entire rooftop. It's a high-ranking barrier, invisible to the human eye.

Not only that, the barrier's purpose is to prevent the casting of spells or the use of magic. This kind of barrier is extremely hard to produce and maintain, and usually is used to cover one single building.

Magic that prevents magic requires plenty of energy, especially as there's no limit to who can enter it.

That's why Hogelten has his attack dog. Not even *he* could use magic in his own home. The price he'd pay for safety.

This means the culprit had to use some human means of entering and murdering Miss Hogelten.

I checked upstairs, the body was already taken away, so I couldn't investigate that for clues. I had to rely on what was left behind.

Firstly, the door was indeed locked. It was impossible for someone to unlock it without a key, held only by Miss Hogelten at the time.

Inside the room was a large table, where Miss Hogelten's body was placed under. On top of the table, there were some pieces of ash. Paper was burnt here, but for what?

The ash was also scattered across the room, probably blown by the wind.

"My wife, she has a list of clients that she donates money to, so it's probably the reason why," said Lord Hogelten.

One thing that I didn't mention about the Hogeltens is that they're con men.

You can't prove anything, however.

Lord Hogelten has already built rumors of illegal black market trading, selling secret magical weapons to the highest bidder, human trafficking using mind control magic.

None of these could be proven, but I've personally looked into some myself, and I honestly believe this was true.

He worked together with his wife as well. She was in charge of laundering and handling the money.

She had a key to a safe that had all the deposits and money they earned safe and sound.

That key was probably stolen.

So how did the Hogeltens become such prestigious figures with rumors like that? Well, it's their family name.

The Hogeltens were nobles, descended from a long line of nobles as well. It's just that the current batch is using their name as leverage to do more... illegal things.

Either way, my best guess for these ashes would be documents, or lists of debt payers, or any kind of information on the Hogelten's large stash of money.

I tried to move the table across the floor, but it was a very heavy table.

Probably why they placed her body there. Either way, I had no choice but to crawl underneath the table.

All I found was a carpet stained with dry blood.

However, I did also smell something... Dry oil.

On the floor, was a trace of dry oil somewhere. Probably what the killer used to burn the documents.

But the oil trace was too smooth, and traced a line from the ashes to the door. The killer didn't spray oil in the room, they prepared an oil trace to be burnt towards the room beforehand.

Sloppy work, but perhaps this explains how they could burn the documents from the outside. Oil that slipped through the doors.

Now the only question is *who* . If it was someone with revenge, then the whole of London should be gathered.

The guests she invited may have been in on it as well.

Then there's the question of how they got out. There are no windows or other exits in the room, so how...?

The entire investigation of the room took a whole day, and checking my watch, I had realized that it was almost noon.

That's when Olgrave showed up once more.

"Guests waiting at the lobby, Master Hogelten. They're here to see you," said Olgrave.

"I didn't invite anyone else!"

"They're *very* persistent, Master Hogelten."

We went downstairs, and who I saw at the door was something that defies normal descriptions.

She was wearing tattered clothes, like a dress made of patchwork. Something that seemed like she was just a homeless girl, yet the way she dresses with it makes her look beautiful.

Her skin was pale white, and her blonde hair and eyes were the same color.

Her face was perfection. Beauty unachievable. It's as if a Goddess had given birth to a child, regardless of how strange she dressed.

However, with all these descriptions of beauty, I still felt something resembling fear when I saw her.

Her eyes stared into me, and her silent smile betrayed something hiding behind that layer of innocence.

"You! What are you doing here!?" asked Hogelten.

"She's with me, and I should be the one you're talking to," said another girl, walking up to the patchwork girl.

This one was dressed in an aristocratic dress, like a musketeer soldier. She had a rapier on her waist, and orange hair, but her features were similar to the patchwork girl.

"I gave you no permission to come here," said Hogelten.

"Oh, but we *do* have permission," said the orange girl.



“Under who’s authority?” challenged Hogelten.

“Mine,” said the orange girl, grinning.

Hogelten’s attack dog growled and approached the two girls slowly, and seemingly in response, the patchwork girl stood in front of the orange girl.

I don't know why I suddenly got in front of these two, but I wasn't going to have people murder each other in a murder investigation.

"Alright, let's all calm down a bit! It's almost noon, perhaps it's time for lunch!" I suggested.

"Lunch!? You can't be serious, Inspector!" yelled Hogelten.

"Lunch would be wonderful, Hogelten. Please do have your servants provide. We're guests after all. Come, Sonia," said the orange girl.

"I like food!" yelped the patchwork girl happily.

I breathed a sigh of relief. These two girls weren't Mages. No, they were something else. Something that had only been a rumor until I saw them.

I was confident.

These two were the so-called Magical Girls. The *other* beings from the Land of Magic.

What I know of Magical Girls is very limited. I know that they supposedly are created using magic. Thus, do Mages create Magical Girls?

I also know that most of their population seems to come from an innate talent that they have during birth.

This has resulted in commoners and peasants being selected to becoming Magical Girls, and many of them seemingly outclass Mages.

This made some of England's Mages quite unhappy, as many of the nobles don't like being one-upped by a peasant with talent.

Either way, I had a feeling that Hogelten wouldn't have survived that, had I not barged in. In any case, it's lunchtime, and I might need the energy from the food.

A delicious meaty lunch was served that afternoon. Whilst the orange Magical Girl ate with her cutlery, the patchwork girl gobbled everything using her arms.

“I had almost forgotten to introduce ourselves. My name is Pukin, this is my loyal follower, Sonia Bean. Say hello, dear,” said Pukin.

Sonia waved her hands while smiling at us.

We introduced each other.

“What should I call you, Madam Pukin?” I asked politely.

“Shogun would suffice. I don’t mind any slips of the tongue, Inspector, so long as it’s not intentional.”

“Very well, Shogun. Quite a fancy title, indeed,” I replied.

“Deserving. Now then, on to the matter at hand. Mr. Hogelten, I understand you have a murder problem,” said Pukin.

“Which was being handled,” said Hogelten.

“Poorly, might I add. Apologies, Inspector, but it’s truly not your fault. The information you’ve been given can be hard to analyze. That’s why I’m here,” said Pukin smiling.

“You expect me to believe a Magical Girl like you can solve a murder case?” asked Hogelten.

“I can solve it today, in fact,” said Pukin, filled with confidence.

Perhaps their natural instincts or their Magical Skills truly *could* help them solve a case that a human detective like me would be hard-pressed to actually solve.

“Bullshit!” said Hogelten.

“Not quite, Mr. Hogelten. Come, Sonia, we’ll have a quick scout along the area. The man clearly believes we’re not capable,” said Pukin.

“I’ll help!” I shouted.

Pukin turned around to me.

“I’ve also been investigating this case. Tell me, what do you know about it?” I asked.

“Nothing. Which is why we’re starting. If you could fill in the blanks, then I can solve this in *less* than a day,” said Pukin grinning once more.

“So you’ve experience in this?” I asked.

“Of course. I’m part of the Examination Division. I’m the best interrogator in the entire Division. No one can lie to me, and if they do, it won’t be for long,” said Pukin.

“But how would you talk to them?”

“Break them.”

“Break them?”

“I’m a torturer. It’s the best form of interrogation. It feeds on fear, and fear is the one thing that keeps people alive. The more fear they have, the more selfish they will be, and they will give you *everything* in order to save themselves,” said Pukin, without even any hint of remorse.

Now I understood why I felt a chill in the air when I first saw her. She seemed to have an aura of death and intimidation.

She’s so casual about the way she mentioned her occupation.

Torturer.

Even normal-minded folk would just say *interrogator* and be done with it. It takes a special kind of crazy to say *torturer* and be fine with that.

Either way... if she really is good, then I’ll just have to see.

Two hours have passed. I told Pukin every detail and every clue that I’ve uncovered within the manor.

After two hours of scouring around, Pukin had gathered around 12 people within the crime scene.

These were all servants, plus myself and Hogelten, and his pet.

“What is this supposed to be then?” asked Hogelten.

“I’ve narrowed down the list of suspects,” said Pukin confidently.

“In two *hours* ?”

“Is it not obvious to you, Hogelten? Your wife was not killed by magic, you made a big deal out of how magic is impossible to be used under this mansion, hence the murderer needed to be human. Or did they?”

“What?” asked Hogelten.

“Truthfully, anyone could have killed your wife, Hogelten, but in order to properly do that, they’d need a decent understanding of the manor itself. An understanding of how it works inside-out, otherwise this locked room mystery won’t be so tightly closed,” said Pukin.

She went to the heavy table, and easily kicked it off into the air, sending it flying towards Miss Hogelten’s bed.

“MY GOD, WOMAN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?” shouted Hogelten.

Pukin removed the rug from the carpet, and with strength, she slammed her foot down the wooden panels.

What we saw...

...Was some kind of trapdoor.

“I expected this. A human needed a way out. As there’s no exits in the walls nor the roof, the only place to check would be the floor. It was highly disguised, so I just gave it a little kick,” said Pukin as she invited us down into the tunnels.

The tunnels spanned far underground, and after the endless trek downwards, we finally started going forwards instead.

Pukin had suggested the servants bring a light source, as humans and Mages can’t see well in the dark, but Magical Girls can.

She led the way, as the tunnels slowly began to head in an upwards direction once again. Finally, there was an end to the tunnels. What seemed to be a lid on the ground.

Pukin knocked on the lid, and opening it, to everyone’s surprise, was Sonia.

She had some dirt on her hands and face, and she sneezed after opening the lid, which made everyone nearly jump, as they were already quite scared of the dark regardless.

Pukin adjusted her rapier as she walked into view, and handed Sonia a handkerchief she pulled out just beneath her rapier, Sonia took the handkerchief, and Pukin rubbed her head as Sonia blew her nose.

“Come then, and I’ll show you who the culprit truly is,” said Pukin as she climbed above the lid.

When everyone climbed up, we found ourselves in a garden in the manor’s backyard.

Pukin bowed down like a stage actor.

“Lo and behold, a secret passageway, hidden in the dirt path. Ingenious and clever, had Sonia not dug out the passageway beforehand,” said Pukin.

Sonia merely smiled and closed her eyes while rocking in the ground happily.

The secret passage was hidden under the dirt path, covered by, well... dirt. It would be easy to miss, unless you know where you’re looking for.

Pukin proceeded forward to a door just near the exit of the secret passage.

“This door leads to the room of one Lord Hogelten,” said Pukin as she knocked on the door, before opening it, revealing it to be indeed Hogelten’s bedroom.

“Wha... What are you implying, Shogun!?” asked Hogelten.

“A passageway straight from your door to your wife’s room, knowledge of the manor, dismissing any possibility that the culprit was a mage. I think it’s clear to everyone at this point...”

Pukin pointed her finger towards Hogelten, grinning as she did so. Pausing for effect, she screamed out...

“The culprit... was *you* !”

“HOW DARE YOU?”

“You showed no remorse over your own wife’s death, you knew the way to kill her, no matter what you say, no matter what you do, you cannot escape the facts, Lord Hogelten. The culprit... was you,” said Pukin once more.

Hogelten’s face went from complete fear and denial to that of calmness. He took a deep breath.

He then smiled.

“I didn’t want to murder my wife. It was inevitable that it would come to that. I had hoped you didn’t show up when you did, Shogun... But you leave me no choice. If anything, this will all be blamed on you,” said Hogelten.

Then, his attack dog rose up and sliced off Hogelten’s skin off of his head, sending him flying away, as he gagged on the ground, dying.

The beast roared as the servants started to run away. Pukin unsheathed her rapier, and within seconds, she sliced off the beast’s head, killing it immediately.

With a flourish, she sheathed her rapier once again.

“Pity. He thought he’d kill everyone in a last bet, but only killed himself in the process. As expected of a criminal,” said Pukin.

Many of the servants had run off, but Olgrave, breathing nervously, came towards Pukin.

“...The Lord and Lady of the manor are dead... I’ll take care of the bodies, but you realize, Shogun Pukin, that this means a noble House has just been destroyed,” said the butler.

“Perhaps. Then again, is it really noble when you know of all the things they’ve committed behind their backs?” asked Pukin with a smile.

She glanced at me,

“Inspector. My thanks on your briefing of the case. It’s been a pleasure working with you. However, I’m a busy woman, and I’ve other cases to

solve. Perhaps someday we'll meet again. Until then, have a good day," said Pukin as she bowed. I bowed as well, as courtesy, and Sonia and her left the building.

I couldn't help but stare at her blood-covered face when she sliced the beast.

She had no emotion, no empathy. It felt like just a normal job to her. The blood suited her.

Had all of us been guilty, she wouldn't have felt bad about killing all of us.

Had the beast finished us off, I'm sure she wouldn't bat an eye and call it *collateral damage* .

Either way, there was no way for me to challenge her, not if the stories of Magical Girls are true.

But the way she solved the case...

...The final revelation...

...It was strange for me.

That night I went to the pub, like every decent Londoner. I took a few swigs of beer, and went back home for the day.

I couldn't catch the culprit, he was dead.

That's not justice, the culprit had escaped justice.

I wasn't able to do anything, and despite not being in any power to do something, being a human in a world of magic, I still felt powerless.

Not even my intuition as an Inspector could help me in the case, seeing as how Pukin seemed to solve it in about two hours.

What did I miss? How was she so accurate? It's as if-

...

...It's as if it was choreographed.

Then it hit me.

Hogelten said “Shogun”.

That was a sign of respect to Pukin. He would never say that, and then after the tunnels, he suddenly did.

But why? He called her Shogun twice. Why suddenly the respect after finding out that he committed the crime?

And then there’s the coincidence. The trap door being in front of Hogelten’s room means nothing objectively. In fact, it’s a perfect tool to frame someone.

Why was Hogelten so willing, when he was always against everything? Why would he kill himself?

If he committed the crime, why did he call me? Did he want to frame someone else? It makes no sense. He would’ve gotten away with it if he didn’t contact me.

It seems so... so *scripted* . The predictions were 100% accurate, nobody questioned anything, and Pukin pulled out clues out of her arse.

...What if it was magic?

What if the reason Hogelten played along was because Pukin had some kind of magic that allowed her to control people?

But the manor had a barrier. There was no way magic could be used at all. I’ve read about barriers, they affect all magical beings, including Magical Girls, so there shouldn’t be an exception.

The barrier was erected from the ground level and was in a dome-shape throughout the manor, so where-

...The tunnels.

Underground.

But when? The darkness would be a perfect time but when would be the *best* time. There has to be proof. She couldn’t have moved without *someone* noticing.

How did her magic work?

What was the key?

...Wait, why did Sonia sneeze? From what I knew of Magical Girls, they don't get sick or have any kind of problems related to that.

Sneezing shouldn't be something that happens unless it was intentional.

Recall the scene.

Pukin adjusted her rapier as she walked into view, and handed Sonia a handkerchief she pulled out just beneath her rapier, Sonia took the handkerchief, and Pukin rubbed her head as Sonia blew her nose.

She adjusted her rapier.

Why did she do that. Why is the handkerchief beneath her rapier? Did she use the rapier while we were all staring at Sonia?

If this was true, this can explain Hogelten's compliance.

Pukin found a solution to the case, and, due to her ego, created a way for her solution to be the correct one.

She improvised the whole way through.

Which means that Hogelten was innocent.

Shit! Shit! Fuck!

Hogelten was an asshole but he wasn't the murderer of his own wife. But then who...

I went back home. I recreated the crime scene. I placed a table, and some documents, along with some matches to burn them.

Originally I had believed that these were people who owed Miss Hogelten money, or people after her money.

But maybe that was a distraction.

If that were true, then there are certain things we know. The murderer must know these things.

Firstly, they must know of the Hogelten's scandalous affairs. Their money laundering, human trafficking, smuggling, all those pleasant things.

Secondly, they must know the layout of the manor, which narrows it down to several loyal servants.

Thirdly, they must draw attention away from the trap door...

That's when I understood the purpose of the oil. The burnt documents, the ashes. They were never meant to lead anywhere, they were red herrings.

All of that was to plant a fake motive, and the oil was to misdirect me to not find the trapdoor.

But then who would know? Who else would know the layout of the castle and be close enough to the Hogeltens?

Of all the faces that flew into my mind, one man's face came forward.

At the end of everything, when all the servants ran off, there was one man who was calm beyond belief. One man who wasn't even flinched. One man who seemed relieved.

Olgrave.

Olgrave would know the family for generations at the very least, and he would also understand their deepest secrets.

Which meant that...

...It was the damn *butler* !

I punched the wall with frustration, as I laughed at the absurdity of it all. Pukin was a master at charisma, enough that she felt like a stage magician, misdirecting all of us to believe in her illusion.

She clearly had no idea who the culprit is, but now... Now I've just helped her kill her second victim.

The butler now has access to the Lord and Lady's personal financial secrets, and seeing as he stole Miss Hogelton's keys, he can now gain the fortune that he must've been searching for.

I'm such a fucking idiot.

I rolled over my bed. My job isn't done. I had to find Olgrave, wherever he is. I need to know more, and I need to get deeper inside this whole thing.

How many people did Pukin indirectly killed with her false accusations?

How many criminals escaped due to her ego?

It's a long night at London. It was raining, as it always does. Tomorrow, I'm going to hunt down a butler.

The next few days? I'll probably spend my time figuring out more into this whole damn thing. Land of Magic, Magical Girls, Mages...

Or maybe I'll just drink myself to sleep.

The Blue Magical Girl is Busy

**This story takes place before Magical Girl
Raising Project: Restart**

The girl only saw the sky with her eyes. Surrounded by thick clouds, the moon and the stars weren't visible. The surroundings were filled with grassy weeds, and the winds were strong. A variety of large rocks were sticking out.

The girl narrowed her eyes. No traps in sight. Although she was a warrior, and wouldn't be sneaking around, she still had to be careful, as her enemies may always use tactics like that. She had to take countermeasures against it.

The coast was clear. She gripped her necktie. Her necktie's color was blue. Just like her namesake. It calms her down whenever she sees that color, so she tends to grip her necktie when she's nervous.

She can't bear to suffer a defeat. To suffer defeat would bring shame. Her master, her fellow students, the people who knew her. She would bring shame to them all if she was defeated.

She listened to the footsteps nearby. She didn't focus her attention on them, but her ears could hear every step.

Climbing the rocks above. Jumping up and standing there.

"You're late," said the girl.

The running person then posed, and began shouting.

"The Blue Spirit Dancing on the Battlefield! Lapis Lazuline!"

The girl wrinkled her brows and looked back at her opponent.

"Lapis... Lazuline?"

The person on the rocks had a blue costume, with a white tiger mantle, same with her tail. Her hair was black and didn't touch her shoulders at all.

Did she misremember her?

That Magical Girl. The girl remembered her face. Clearly, it was the same girl that she knew before. Yet her name was different.

"Aren't you Blue Comet?"

“Oh, my name’s changed recently. My Master gave me my new name. Named after her, in fact.”

“Ah... Well, congratulations.”



“Thanks!”

“Well. This is interesting. It seems our fates are intertwined. What a strange coincidence.”

“Coincidence?”

“I’ve recently changed my name as well.”

“Oh, have you?”

The girl looked at Lazuline, showing Lazuline her left hand. Tattooed on it was a blue dragon, its mouth wide open.

“Once I was called Blue Dragon Panasu. However, now, that isn’t the case anymore.”

“Oooh, interesting!”

The girl then showed Lazuline her right palm. Tattooed there was a black dragon, its wings spread out, ready to fly.

“I now control two dragons. Thus, my name has now become... *Twin Dragons Panasu* .”

“Whoa! That’s so cool!”

Lazuline stared at Panasu’s hands, looking closely at her dragon tattoos.

“Back in the Hell Survival Games... I met you on the battlefield,” said Panasu.

“Oh yeah! You did so good! Real tough to fight, actually!”

Ever since that event, Panasu thought about a rematch every day. Many Magical Girls entered that match, but only one could win victory.

Panasu belonged in the Mao’s School, and Mao Pam carefully selected several individuals outside her school to be invited to participate.

It was a Battle Royale. A training regiment as well as a test of strength. Panasu aimed to win in that event.

Then she met her first opponent in the forests, *Blue Comet* .

She was unexpectedly fast and strong, and her punches were incredibly powerful. Her movements were hard to predict as well, and before she knew it, Panasu was staring at the ceiling of the First Aid tent.

Her first opponent in the match was her last.

Many other Magical Girls who lost the match quit the Mao's School out of shame. But Panasu knew herself. Quitting isn't the way out.

Panasu believed that to recover her shame, she needed to overcome her opponent and win.

So she re-enrolled to the Mao's School as a newcomer. Starting from scratch, she focused hard on her training.

Day after day, fight after fight, training her body to become stronger, passing the point of no return.

There are days where it felt like she would die of exhaustion, but she kept on pushing herself past that point.

Finally, after a year of daily intense training, she strengthened her body. Likewise, her magic seems to have improved vastly.

Now, she felt like she could win.

Lazuline looked at Panasu's hands while tilting her neck.

"So, Panassie, remind me about your magic again?"

"...Panassie... Is that supposed to be my name?"

"Of course, Panassie! So, your magic is... Hang on a bit... You can control those drawings on your hands right?"

"They're not *drawings* ."

"Oh. What should I call 'em then?"

"They're Dragon Crests of the ancient dragons of yore. When I was Blue Dragon Panasu, I can only control one dragon. However, through endless training, I now possess the power of the Dragon of Darkness itself. The Hellish power of that dragon now flows through me!"

"Cool! So they have names?"

Panasu raised her left arm.

" *Jormungandr* ! The God-Eating Blue Poison Dragon!"

Panasu raised her right arm.

“ *Nidhgr* ! The Black Flying Dragon, Dancer of the Apocalypse!”

Panasu had learned that the best way to defeat your opponent is through surprise attacks, using your magic when your opponent doesn't know them.

Certainly, if Lazuline didn't know about Panasu's Black Dragon, she would've been caught off-guard.

However, that isn't a victory to Panasu, even if she did beat Lazuline.

Panasu wanted a fair fight, so it was only fair to inform Lazuline about her own powers.

“Oooh, so the more emblems you got the more stronger your magic becomes right? Still, you think you might overload a bit?”

“What? No. I trained for this. I've only increased to two dragons, and I can handle them.”

Why is *she* worried?

“Oh, that's good! Wouldn't want you to get hurt, haha!”

Is she mocking her? Panasu wanted to get the fight started as soon as possible, but she had to remember that Lazuline was a powerful opponent.

“Soon, you will realize the *true* power of Twin Dragons Panasu!”

“Can't wait! Did you know I've always wanted to ride a dragon since I was a kid? I've had dreams about it, and now a Magical Girl that can control dragons comes right up to me! What a lucky day!”

Lazuline laughed. Panasu looked back confused.

“Wait, what? What are you talking about?” asked Panasu.

“Oh, well, you know how to control the dragons right? I just assumed you wanted to ride one with me!”

“...Why would I use my power to ride a dragon with you?”

“Cause I’m headed to a Ramen shop soon. I have enough time for a dragon ride though! In fact, what if we used the dragon to go to the Ramen shop?”

“...Huh?”

“Y’know I was nervous on why I was called out here to the mountains, but now that it’s about your powers, I’m actually excited to ride dragons with you!”

“Wait wait, hold on!”

“What’s up?”

“What do you mean... *Ramen Shop* ?”

“You don’t know what a *Ramen Shop* is, Panassie?”

“NO, I DO! I know about Ramen Shops! I eat Ramen once a week! I mean, I usually order them online anyways!”

“Online? No can do! They call ‘em Soul Food, to keep you all hyped up for the day! But you should go to a Ramen Shop, since you gotta know what it’s like to eat Ramen in an authentic shop!”

“What does Ramen have anything to do with this!?”

“Cause *you* said so, Panassie!”

“No I didn’t!”

“Yeah you did! In your letter you sent me!”

Lazuline took out a letter from her cloak. That was indeed the letter that Panasu sent to Lazuline. A battle invitation letter.

Panasu checked the contents. Nothing had been modified.

“Nothing in here says anything about Ramen,” said Panasu.

“Lookie over here! ‘Remember that time’. ‘Don’t forget.’ ‘I’ll repay what I owe you’. ‘My honorable gift to you’.”

“T-That’s because you defeated me in the Hell Survival Games! My repayment is my victory! I trained hard, so now I’ve become Twin

Dragons! T-That's what I hope to achieve!"

"Aw, well ya gotta be more clear on that!"

"Y-You wouldn't understand. There's pride in Mao's School students."

"But I never beat you in that event."

"W-What?"

Panasu tightened her necktie.

"Ya don't remember?" asked Lazuline.

"I can't forget that day. We were fighting and then the next thing I remember was me waking up at the hospital tent."

"You *seriously* forgot? I thought 'whoa, this girl's tough!' and we fought, but then in the middle of all the fighting, an explosion happened, and you were caught in the middle. I rescued you from the rubble and brought you over to the emergency staff."

"Wha... What?"

"Yeah, you were pretty tough, Panasu!"

"But... But my flag. My flag was captured by you... In the event, that's proof. That's proof that you defeated me!"

"That's cause you were knocked out. You were eliminated. Game Over. Cause as soon as you need emergency staff, you get eliminated remember? Since I was the last person who touched you, I got your flag."

Panasu rubbed her chin. Lazuline's story makes sense, but it doesn't jog with Panasu's memory.

She had always remembered that Lazuline was the one that took her flag, meaning Lazuline defeated her, meaning she had to defeat Lazuline.

Panasu thought, and thought, and thought...

"Ah, I see what you're doing here!" exclaimed Panasu.

"What?"

“You’re trying to trick me into not fighting! Don’t take the coward’s way out!”

“I’m not lying! I’m telling the truth!”

“But how come your story doesn’t match with your other story!”

“Huh?”

“You said that I somehow mentioned Ramen in the letter. Yet, based on your own story, nothing about Ramen was mentioned! Your stories don’t add up, Lazuline!”

“Oh, that! When you were passed out in the tent, I stayed for a bit to help tend your wounds. You were moaning ‘Ramen... Ramen...’ in your sleep. When you said ‘Remember that time’ in the letter, I thought that’s what you meant.”

“...Impossible!”

“Totally possible!”

“Nonsense! I would never do anything like that!”

“What kind of Ramen do you like Panassie?”

“That depends. As a Magical Girl you don’t really have to worry about negative side-effects such as calories or any possible bad nutrients in your Ramen. As a Magical Girl your senses are enhanced, that includes your sense of smell and your sense of taste. Thus, the intense scent of Kumamoto Ramen would be preferable. You can also enjoy Ramen whose tastes are harder to swallow, like Kurume Ramen. However, as a human, taste is the most important factor, so I prefer my Ramen with seafood and some rice porridge...”

Panasu blinked at her own speech.

“...But that *doesn’t* mean on a life or death situation I’d be thinking about RAMEN of all things!”

“But you were just talking about Ramen”

“That proves *nothing* ! I like Ramen, but I can’t possibly be thinking of Ramen when I almost died!”

Lazuline and Panasu can’t seem to agree. Panasu got even more frustrated. Panasu tightened her necktie.

“We’re not *going* to a Ramen Shop,” said Panasu.

“I told you I’m not lying! You really *did* say that!” said Lazuline.

“Ramen is good, but that’s not the problem!”

“Oh... Okay then! So what is?”

“If what you say is true, and I was defeated in an explosion in the midst of our battle... Then that means... Our fight isn’t over.”

Panasu pointed her index finger at Lazuline.

“So, Lapis Lazuline. We settle this here! We fight here! You’re a fighter, right? You certainly won’t run away!”

“Well... I won’t run away, but uh...”

Lazuline scratched her head. She began stretching her arms out. She had a nervous smile.

“Y’know, if we fight now, I’ll lose for sure,” said Lazuline.

“What makes you say that?” asked Panasu.

“Well... Isn’t it obvious? You’ve clearly trained for days just for this moment. I came here all prepped up to eat Ramen. I’m in no shape to fight.”

“Well... That’s true, but...”

“Also, if we’re gonna fight, we’re not holding back, right? First one to knock the other out, right? Back in the Hell Games there was first aid help. Out here? What are we gonna do with the other person? They’re gonna need some serious recovery if you really wanna fight seriously. I already know I’ll lose in these conditions. I’ll probably need a week’s worth of rest to recover.”

“That’s also true...”

Panasu had thought a duel in the middle of nowhere would be the perfect thing to restore her honor. However, she did feel a little bad if she had to beat up Lazuline.

“Also, I’m kinda in the middle of something my Master asked me to do. I don’t really wanna cancel a request from you, Panassie... But I’m worried that I won’t be able to do my Master’s errands too.”

Panasu tightened her necktie. For her, the word ‘Master’ and ‘Mentor’ had weight. As a member of Mao’s School, Panasu would do anything Mao Pam asked her to do.

She can’t fault Lazuline for doing something her Master asked her to do. She can’t take that away for her own benefit.

Panasu felt bad for Lazuline, even though they were supposed to be enemies today.

“Then how about this. You finish your Master’s errands first. Then, after that, we’ll fight, okay?”

“Oh! That’s a great idea! Alright, Panassie! Let’s head out together!”

“Wait, why do I have to go with you?”

“Cause I’ll finish my errands faster with you, duh! Besides, I look way too ‘magical’ for people, so people might think I’m a Magical Girl. The only solution is to hide and get there faster... and what better way to do *that* than with your DRAGONS!”

Lazuline pointed at Panasu’s hands.

Oh. So she just wanted to ride the dragons.

Panasu looked up at the sky. The clouds are getting darker, and the winds are blowing stronger.

It’s about to rain.

If Panasu waited for Lazuline to finish her errands all alone here in the wilderness, she would look like a miserable loner just standing in the rain.

Better to follow her for now.

“Alright. I’ll tag along.”

Whenever the shoes tapped the floor, it made a loud sound on the warehouse floorboards.

There were two Magical Girls dressed completely in black. One was carrying a Duralumin case, and Lazuline was just happily waiting for them.

They passed the Duralumin case over to Lazuline, who accepted it with a smile. In return, she passed over a box.

Panasu really didn’t want to be here. She simply watched nearby, not making any noises or movements at all.

“You brought a bodyguard. You don’t trust us, now?” asked one of the Magical Girls.

Bodyguard? Oh no. I really don’t want to be involved .

Lazuline then spoke up.

“Aw, she’s not a bodyguard! She’s a friend of mine!”

“Don’t make me laugh. Those tattoos on your hands. Your Twin Dragons Panasu right? From Mao’s School. A skilled fighter like you just *happens* to be friends with her? Too much of a coincidence,” said the other Magical Girl.

“I’m not Twin Dragons Panasu! Y-You’ve got the wrong girl!” said Panasu.

“Oh?”

“Y-Yeah, I get that a lot. We look the same, but we’re not really the same person, ahaha...”

These Magical Girls seem stupid enough to buy the bluff. Panasu really didn’t want to be here.

“Ah... Well, y’know what they say. You have about 3 identical twins in the world somewhere,” said one of the Magical Girls.

They actually believed her.

This entire thing looked like an illegal trade. If the rumors spread that *Twin Dragons Panasu was seen doing illegal stuff*, Panasu might be kicked out of the Mao's School, or get in a lot of worse things.

She had a reputation to maintain.

So she told herself, *I'm not Panasu. I'm not Panasu. I'm just a bystander* as she came with Lazuline.

After all that's done, Panasu and Lazuline walked out, and didn't see the other two Magical Girls again.

Panasu tightened her necktie.

"Whew... So, errands all done? Can we duel now?"

"Ahaha... Sorry, there's still a couple more things I need to do!" said Lazuline.

After the transaction in the warehouse, Lazuline moved towards the city. Now where was she going?

She dragged Panasu into what seemed like a nursery home. There were lots of children wearing aprons and having utensils.

"Alright! Stir it up, don't let the whites and the yellows mix, okay?" said Lazuline.

"Yes, ma'am!" shouted the children.

They began cooking and cooking. Meanwhile, Lazuline headed to the other end of the room, and exchanged the Duralumin case with the teacher, who gave her a cardboard box in exchange.

Panasu was confused. What was this supposed to be? Children cooking? What was Lazuline planning?

"Hey, Panassie! Here!" said Lazuline, offering a bowl and some utensils.

Panasu looked confused.

“What’s this supposed to be?”

“Cooking, silly! I can’t just have you standing in the corner when everyone else is doing some work! C’mon, it’ll be fun!”

“...Cooking?”

“Yeah! Just stir it up, don’t mix it too much, ‘kay?”

Panasu didn’t really know what to consider, and wasn’t sure of Lazuline’s endgame. She took the bowl in her right hand, and the stirrer with her left.

She used her Magical Girl speed and strength to stir the bowl as fast as she could.

The ingredients splashed all over the floor and to the children’s faces. The children all screamed in panic.

“WHOA WHOA! PANASSIE! WHAT’RE YOU DOING? SLOW DOWN!” shouted Lazuline.

“Eh? Huh? O-Oh... M-My bad...”

“Ahaha, calm down, kay? Gently, Panassie! Gently...”

The kids all cleaned up the mess Panasu made, and Panasu blushed in embarrassment as she stirred slowly and slowly.

“Wow, there’s people like that too, huh?”

“Wonder if she knows how to cook?”

“Hehe, she made a big mess.”

The children were all laughing, and for some reason, Panasu felt really embarrassed about that.

After cooking, Lazuline brought Panasu into an open field. However, there was also a gymnasium nearby, and the two went inside.

Lazuline took Panasu into a large room. Inside were several girls changing clothes. This was a changing room.

Lazuline took out the things from the cardboard box. Handed some over to Panasu, while taking some for herself.

The clothes were made of light fabric. These clothes also looked outlandish. This was a costume.

“What’s this?” asked Panasu.

“A costume! C’mon, we’re gonna be late! Go ahead and change! There’s some spares for me, but I thought you should use the spares for yourself, since you’re here.”

Panasu looked at the costume in her hands. This seemed very familiar.

“What costume is this?” asked Panasu.

“ *Cutie Healer Galaxy* costumes! That’s Cutie Altair. We’re gonna dress up as her! Oh, with your personality, you’re a Cutie Vega person, aren’t ya, Panassie? But you look so much better as Altair!”

“...What exactly... Are we wearing these for?” asked Panasu.

“We’re attending an event!”

“What event?”

“A Magical Girl Cosplay Event of course!”

“...But why?”

“Well, my Master told me that in order to increase awareness of Magical Girls and our work, it’d be great for actual Magical Girls to help out people in disguise!”

“I... see...”

Lazuline grabbed some notes from her cloak.

“Oh, by the way, in case anyone ever wanted to help me, I wrote these down. This is what you should do when you’re interacting with fans, ‘kay?” said Lazuline.

Panasu rejected the paper.

“I’m a veteran Magical Girl of the Mao’s School. I know how to interact with Magical Girl fans. Please, you act as if all I do is fight.”

“Oookay, good luck!”

Not five minutes after they got started in the event, and Panasu was already exhausted.

She felt embarrassed and nervous. So many fans were looking at her. Altair’s outfit clearly was different from Panasu’s style.

Whenever a fan wanted to take pictures of her posing, she had to obey.

She placed a smile for the entire event. Lazuline seemed to do a lot better, but Panasu lost track of her in the crowd.

Even more than that, Panasu was dressing up as Cutie Altair. Altair was a fellow classmate and a very famous face in Mao’s School, so this is embarrassing in more ways than one.

In the training camp, Altair was a rival of almost everyone in Panasu’s training class. She was nearly unbeatable, and so doing this... was just adding salt to the wound.

Lazuline, dressed as Cutie Vega, came up towards Panasu. They posed back to back together. Lazuline whispered over to Panasu.

“Nice work! Wow, you look really cute in that outfit! You’re a natural, Panassie!”

Panasu wanted to tighten her necktie, but it’s not even there. She simply breathed slowly, and began posing the classic Cutie Healer poses.

After the Cosplay event ended, Lazuline took Panasu somewhere else once more. This time, they were waiting for someone.

It’s been half a day since Panasu first asked Lazuline to a duel.

From the gym, Panasu saw a car driving towards them. Panasu got a bad feeling just watching the car. All the event people have left, and it’s

just the two of them now.

Lazuline checked on the cardboard box she got earlier.

“Hey, just what’re you checking on?”

“Oh, just makin’ sure the secret weapon’s there.”

“Secret weapon? Wait! Just what are you doing? What does your Master want you to do? How long is this going to take? What’s going on?”

“Whoa, whoa, whoa, Panassie, calm down!” said Lazuline, casually smiling and trying to calm the situation.

Suddenly, black amorphous beings surrounded the warehouse. Upon looking at these *things*, Panasu is reminded of her Master, Mao Pam’s wings.

They surrounded the gym from all sides. Not just the inside, but it looked like the *things* were gathering outside as well.

Lazuline and Panasu were back to back. Panasu couldn’t see Lazuline’s face, but her body felt relaxed, not tense at all.

A voice came from outside the gym.

“So you’ve been here this whole time.”

A Magical Girl entered the gym. It was one of the black-suited Magical Girls from the warehouse back then.

She carried what seemed to be a box. She hit the box. The box cracked open. There was nothing inside.

“You think we’d just accept an empty trade, huh?” asked the Magical Girl.

“So I’m assuming you wanna return it, huh?” asked Lazuline.

“You know what we agreed on. Return it and you’ll get out of here alive,” said the Magical Girl.

“Mmm, sorry... My Master has a no return policy,” said Lazuline.

“Well then...”

The Magical Girl raised her right hand, but before she could snap her fingers, Lazuline immediately jumped forward and performed a drop kick towards her.

The black *things* immediately moved to protect the Magical Girl, and Lazuline's kick landed on the *things* instead.

The Magical Girl moved away, as the *things* attacked the two Magical Girls.

Panasu wasn't a slacker either. She dodged the *things* that were coming for her, as Lazuline kicked them away. Her movements were just as fast as Panasu remembered.

Lazuline reached for the cardboard box, and pulled out several rubber balls out.

"What are you doing!?" asked Panasu.

"Secret weapon!"

"Rubber balls?"

"Lazuline Balls silly! I had those cooking kids make it a couple days back in exchange for me teaching 'em. These super tough rubber balls have gems inside of 'em."

The *things* were surrounding the gymnasium. Soon, almost the entire gym would be destroyed, as they started to crack.

Lazuline threw the rubber ball towards the walls. Due to its properties and Lazuline's strength, the ball bounced wildly across the room.

Panasu could barely keep track of the ball's location, but just as fast, Lazuline disappeared in a flash, and switched places with the ball.

No, that's not right.

Lazuline didn't switch with the ball. The ball's still moving, Lazuline is only teleporting towards the ball's location.

She teleported, kicking and punching the *things* as the ball began to destroy the floorboards, bouncing here and there.

Lazuline teleported here and there, none of the Magical Girls could catch where the rubber ball would go to next, but Lazuline adjusted quickly.

When the ball would slow down, Lazuline would teleport to the ball, and kick it away as hard as she could, keeping the momentum of the ball.

The *things* were slowly being killed off, but the gym was nearly collapsing.

The Magical Girl decided to ignore Lazuline, and ordered her *things* to attack Panasu instead.

Panasu didn't want to lose against Lazuline in a team-up. She raised her left hand.

“ *Jormungandr* !”

A long blue dragon came out of her hand, attacking the *things* and biting them to pieces. But the *things* held the blue dragon in place, prepared to kill it.

Panasu grinned. She raised her right hand, and shouted,

“ *Nidhogr* !”

A winged black dragon attacked the *things* that were pinning the blue dragon down. The black dragon breathed fire, which scorched most of the *things* apart.

“I KNEW IT! I KNEW YOU WERE TWIN DRAGONS PANASU! THAT MAGIC!” shouted the Magical Girl as the gymnasium caught on fire.

Panasu's black dragon roared and raged across the gymnasium, as the Magical Girl retreated with her *things* .

The gymnasium had burned to the ground, destroyed. Leaving only a large field of grass in its wake.

Paramedics and the Fire Department have already shown up. Lazuline and Panasu had retreated secretly into the nearby woods.

They were tired.

Lazuline leaned against a tree, while Panasu sat down nearby.

“Well Panassie... *huff huff* ... I’m done with my errands... Whew...”

“Ahaha... Yeah... But the gym’s destroyed.”

“Aw, don’t worry about that. See, the mayor here got a grant from the city. He... *Huff*... He wanted to rebuild the gym into something else... It’s an old building but he didn’t wanna bulldoze it. I think he was hoping that it’d collapse so he could build something better instead... My Master gave me that job. One of my errands was to find a way to destroy that gym... So thanks, haha!”

Panasu couldn’t believe the story she heard. She chuckled to herself. So it was all part of the plan, huh?

Lazuline offered a hand, Panasu took it and stood up.

“Well, Panassie. You still up for that Ramen Shop thing?” asked Lazuline.

“Absolutely. I’ve shopped online and know the best Ramen Shop in this town. You can eat Curry Ramen there.”

“Curry Ramen? I’ve never had those.”

“ *What* !? You’ve *never* had Curry Ramen? Well, my friend, it’s time you try out *just* how delicious Curry Ramen is.”

And so, the two Magical Girls walked together, chatting and laughing along the way, towards the Ramen Shop.